NEW

NAPOLEON

THE RISE AND FALL OF A REVOLUTIONARY EMPEROR

1769-
1821
Celebrating the
life of the iconic
military leader

MILITARY MASTERMIND

How one man's thirst for power changed the course of European history

……

LOVE & WAR

The conquests that defined Napoleon's life both on and off the battlefield

BATTLES • REVOLUTIONS • CULTURE • EMPIRE

Digital Edition

FUTURE
FOURTH EDITION

WELCOME TO

NAPOLEON

• THE RISE AND FALL OF A REVOLUTIONARY EMPEROR •

When Napoleone di Buonaparte was born on the Mediterranean island of Corsica in 1769, his parents could never have imagined the impact their son would come to have on the world.

Few historical figures have been as captivating and divisive as Napoleon. To some, he was the hero who restored order and glory to France after the anarchy of the Revolution. To others, he became more of a tyrant than the oppressive monarchs he replaced.

Whether admired or despised, it is hard not to be fascinated by the stranger-than-fiction story of one man's rise from obscurity to emperor. In this book we reveal how Napoleon Bonaparte became a legendary conqueror, charting his momentous military victories and devastating defeats. Across the following pages we'll meet the significant figures in Napoleon's personal and political life and consider the lasting legacy of his rule - which lives on over 250 years after his birth.

FUTURE

NAPOLEON

THE RISE AND FALL OF A REVOLUTIONARY EMPEROR

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Bookazine Editorial
Editor **Jackie Snowden & Hannah Westlake**
Designer **Rebecca Hearl**
Compiled by **Charles Ginger & Adam Markiewicz**
Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**
Editorial Director **Jon White**

All About History Editorial
Editor **Jonathan Gordon**
Designer **Kym Winters**
Editorial Director **Tim Williamson**
Senior Art Editor **Duncan Crook**

Photography
All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected

Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**

International
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com
www.futurecontenthub.com

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Matthew Eglinton**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Managers **Keely Miller, Nola Cokely,**
Vivienne Calvert, Fran Twentyman

Printed by William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road,
Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

All About History Napoleon Fourth Edition (AHB4133)
© 2021 Future Publishing Limited

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this bookazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The paper holds full FSC or PEFC certification and accreditation.

All contents © 2021 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

FUTURE

Connectors.
Creators.
Experience
Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

Part of the
ALL ABOUT HISTORY
bookazine series

Widely Recycled

ipso. For press freedom with responsibility

CONTENTS

BONAPARTE RISING

010 HOUSE OF BONAPARTE
Charting the Napoleonic dynasty

012 THE STAR OF NAPOLEON ASCENDANT
What drove the young Bonaparte toward the pursuit of power?

020 EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE
The woman who stole Napoleon's heart

028 LETTERS TO JOSÉPHINE
Napoleon's passionate letters to his wife

032 EARLY MILITARY CAREER
How Napoleon rose through the ranks

036 NAPOLEON IN EGYPT
The quest to claim Egypt for the empire

040 FROM FIRST CONSUL TO EMPEROR
The coup that led to Napoleon's coronation

EMPEROR NAPOLEON

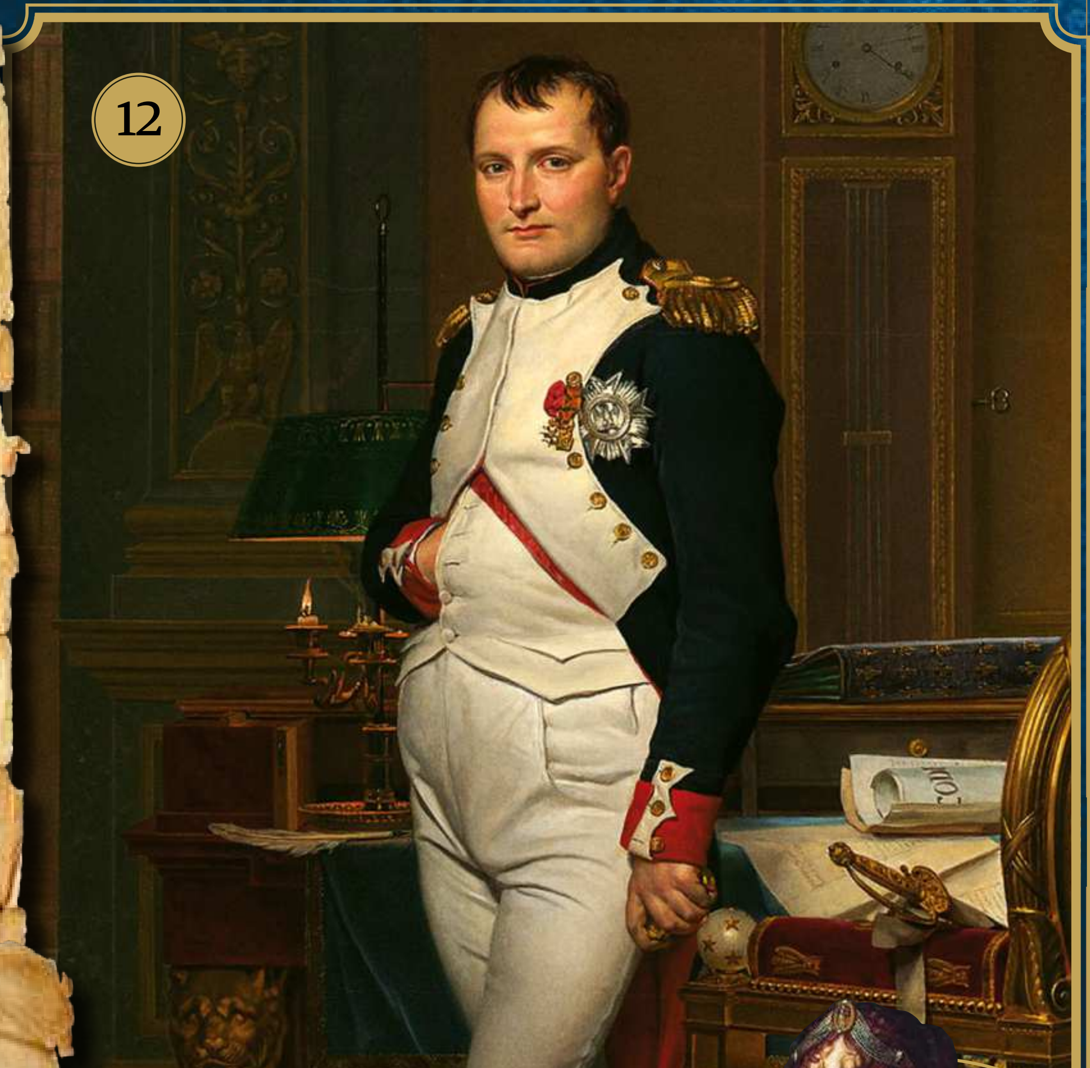
046 THE TUILERIES PALACE
How the former royal residence became Napoleon's home

052 FAMILY, FRIENDS & ALLIES
The key figures in Napoleon's career

056 NELSON AND THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR
Challenging Britain's naval domination

064 THE NAPOLEONIC CODE
The reforms that continue to shape France

068 AUSTERLITZ
The downfall of the Holy Roman Empire



076 NAPOLEON & RELIGION
The emperor's rivalry with the Vatican

082 MARIE LOUISE
Napoleon's search for a second wife who could provide him with an heir

088 THE PENINSULAR WAR
Why the French occupation of the Iberian Peninsula failed

096 THE MARCH TO MOSCOW
How an attempt to invade Russia left the Grand Armée decimated

104 BATTLE OF BORODINO
The horrors of the single bloodiest day's battle in history at that point spelled the beginning of the end for Napoleon

NAPOLEON FALLS

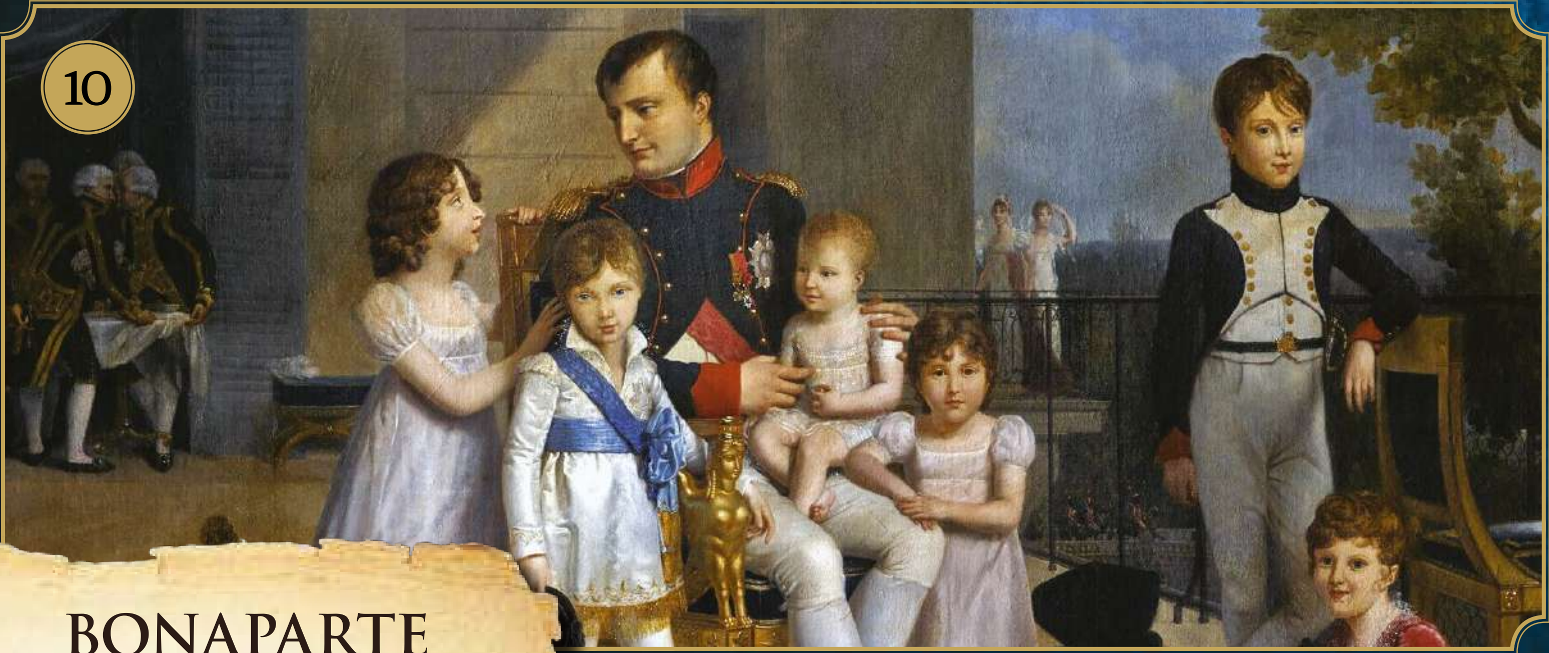
116 THE OPERETTA EMPEROR
Napoleon's first exile on the island of Elba

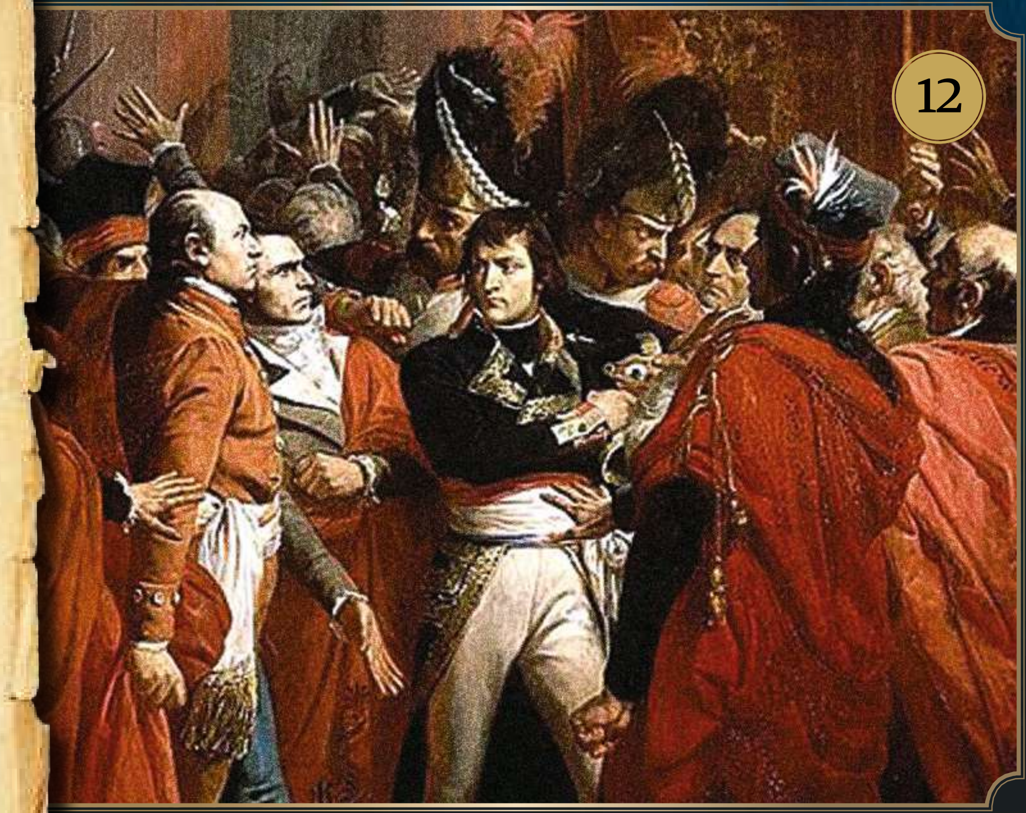
122 NAPOLEON'S LAST STAND
The emperor strikes back at the fateful Battle of Waterloo

132 NAPOLEON IN EXILE
The defeated emperor's final banishment to the tiny Atlantic island of St Helena

138 THE END OF AN EMPEROR
The enduring legacy and legend of Napoleon Bonaparte I

BONAPARTE RISING


10


12

BONAPARTE RISING

010 HOUSE OF BONAPARTE
Charting the Napoleonic dynasty

012 THE STAR OF NAPOLEON ASCENDANT
What drove the young Bonaparte toward the pursuit of power?

020 EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE
The woman who stole Napoleon's heart

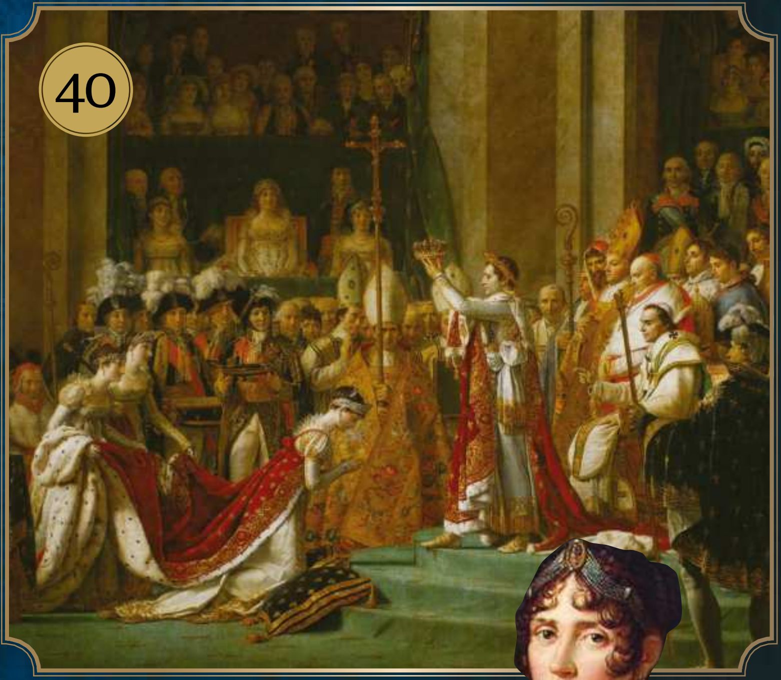
028 LETTERS TO JOSÉPHINE
Napoleon's passionate letters to his wife

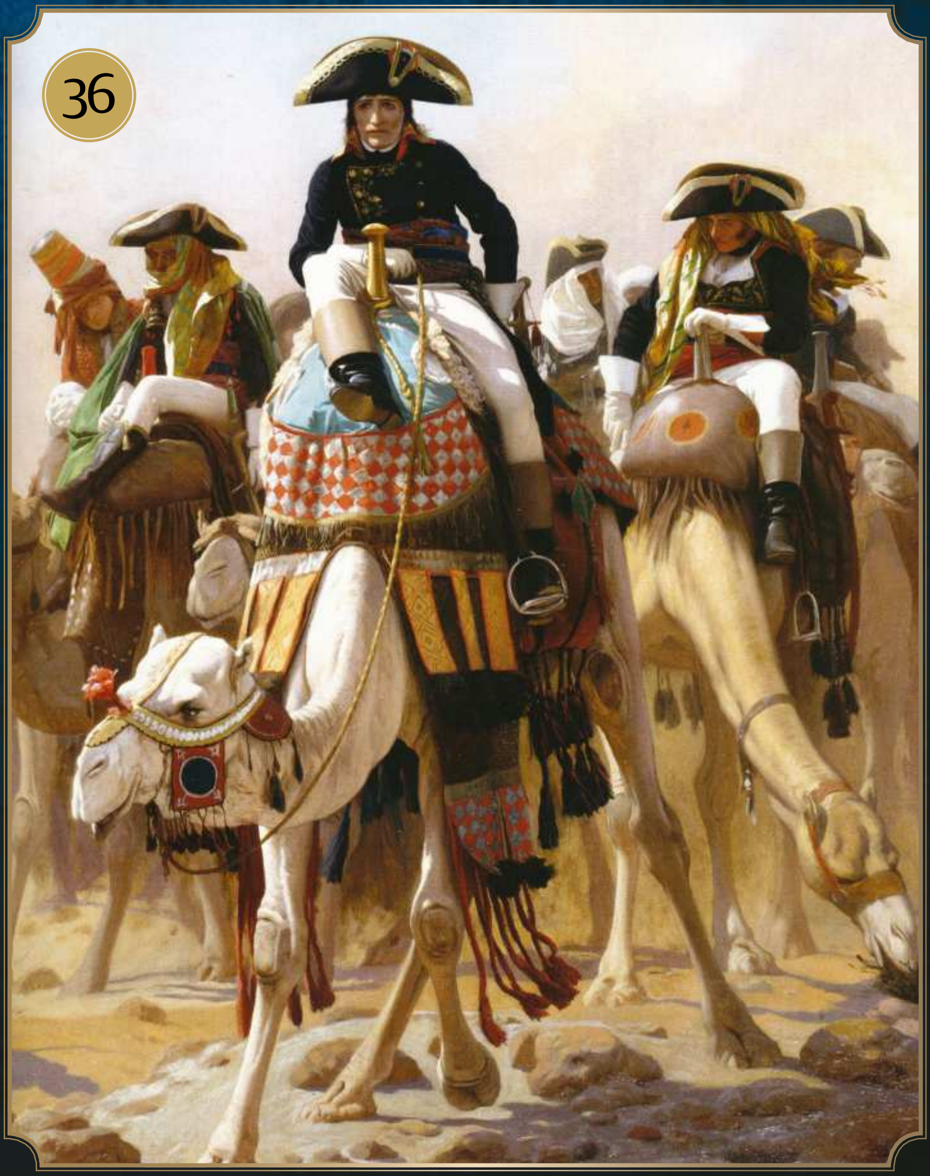
032 EARLY MILITARY CAREER
How Napoleon rose through the ranks

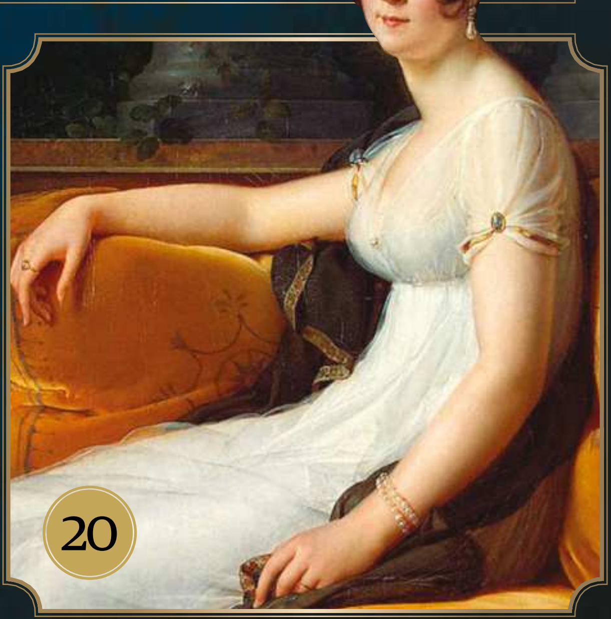
036 NAPOLEON IN EGYPT
The quest to claim Egypt for the empire

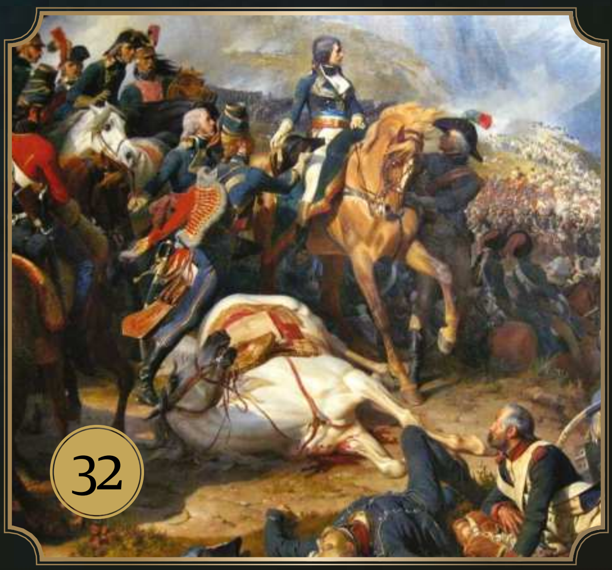
040 FROM FIRST CONSUL TO EMPEROR
The coup that led to Napoleon's coronation

28


40

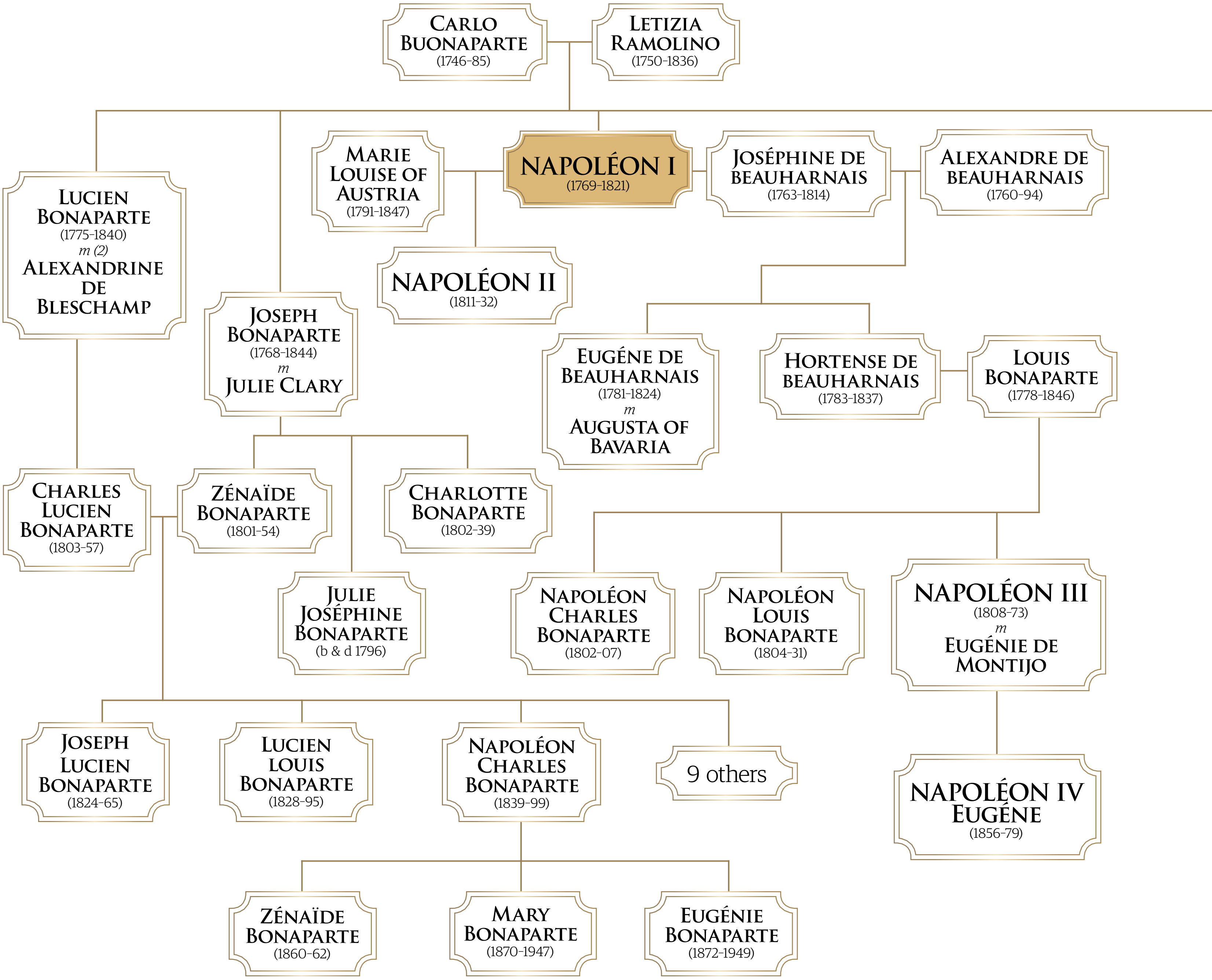

36

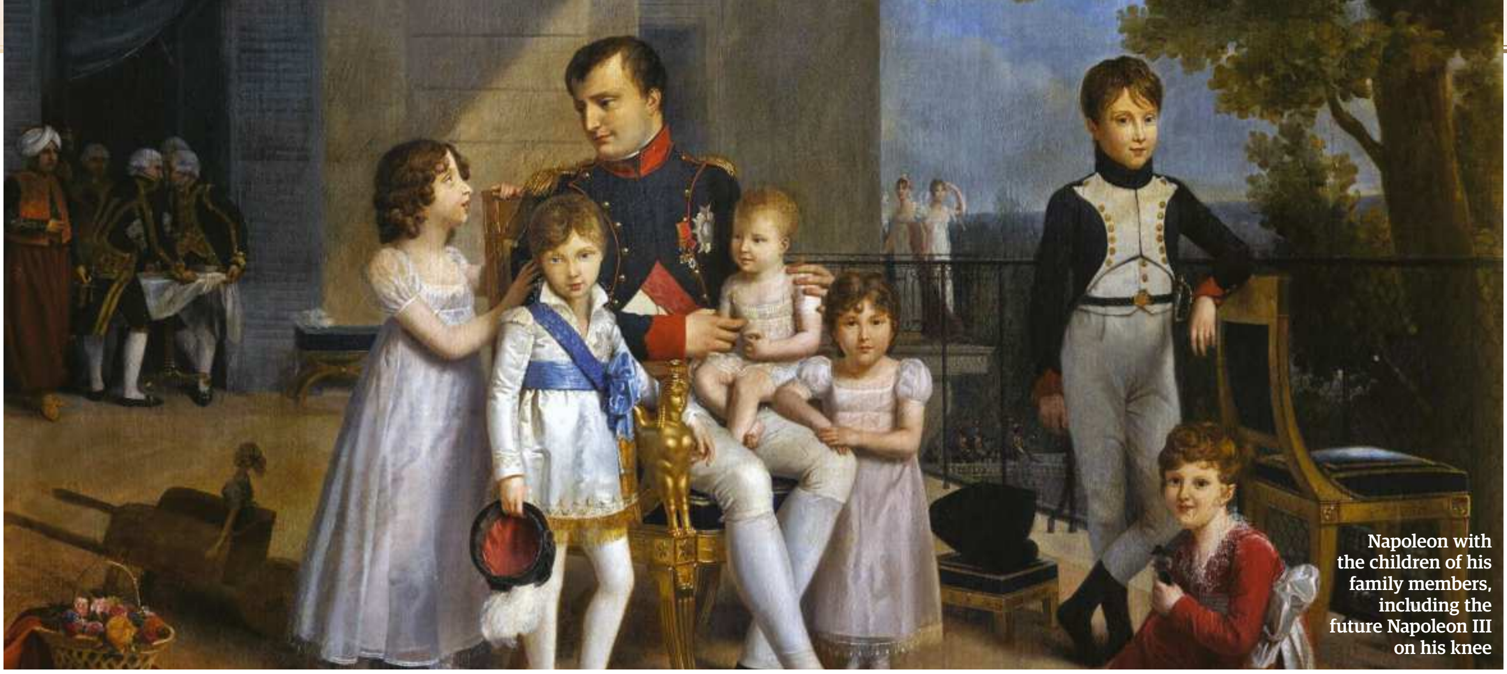

20


32

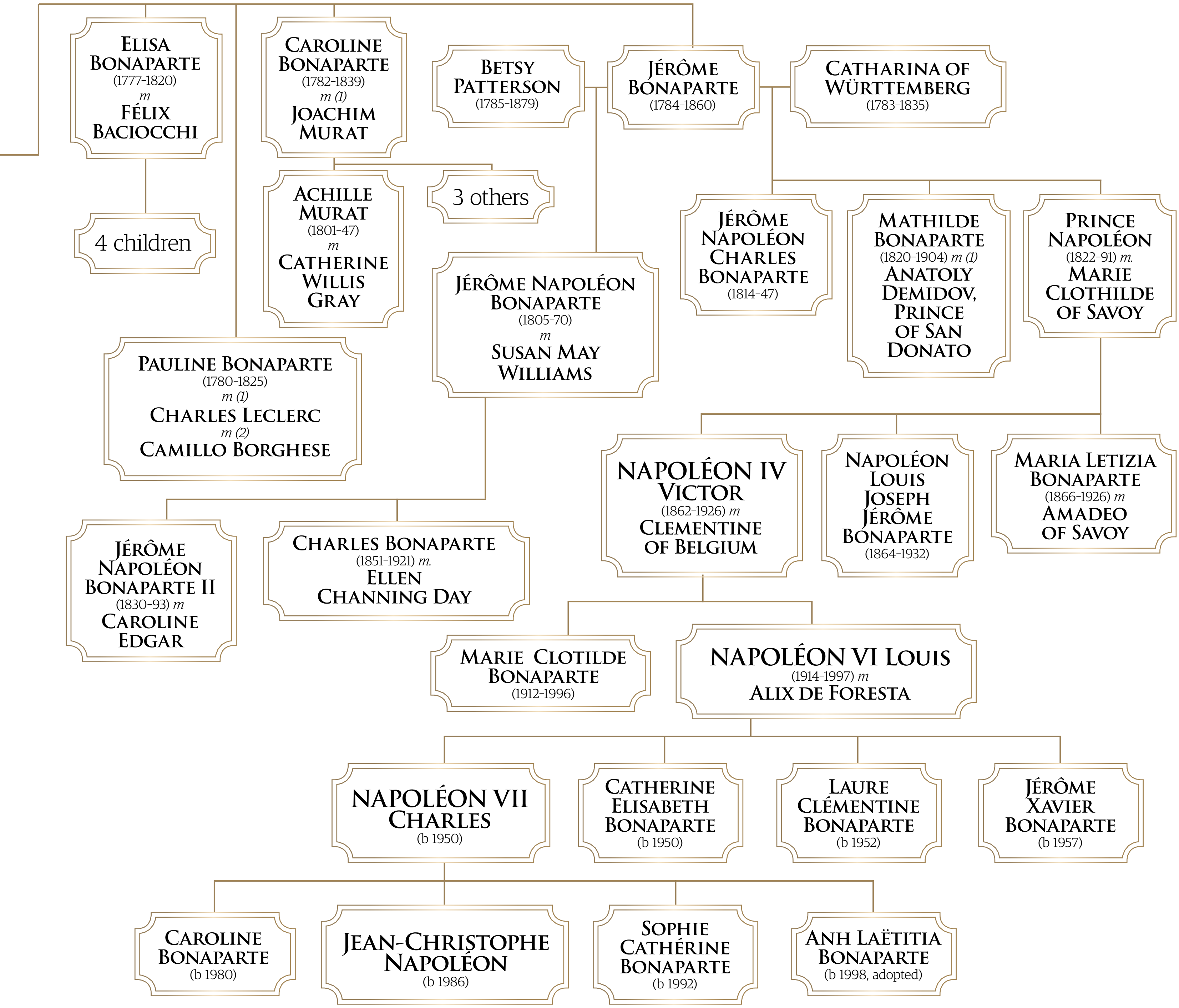
THE HOUSE OF BONAPARTE

Napoleon's family formed a powerful dynasty that ruled the French Empire


CARLO BUONAPARTE (1746-85)
LETIZIA RAMOLINO (1750-1836)
LUCIEN BONAPARTE (1775-1840) m (2) ALEXANDRINE DE BLESCHAMP
JOSEPH BONAPARTE (1768-1844) m JULIE CLARY
MARIE LOUISE OF AUSTRIA (1791-1847)
NAPOLÉON I (1769-1821)
JOSÉPHINE DE BEAUHARNAIS (1763-1814)
ALEXANDRE DE BEAUHARNAIS (1760-94)
NAPOLÉON II (1811-32)
EUGÉNE DE BEAUHARNAIS (1781-1824) m AUGUSTA OF BAVARIA
HORTENSE DE BEAUHARNAIS (1783-1837)
LOUIS BONAPARTE (1778-1846)
CHARLES LUCIEN BONAPARTE (1803-57)
ZÉNAÏDE BONAPARTE (1801-54)
CHARLOTTE BONAPARTE (1802-39)
JULIE JOSÉPHINE BONAPARTE (b & d 1796)
NAPOLÉON CHARLES BONAPARTE (1802-07)
NAPOLÉON LOUIS BONAPARTE (1804-31)
NAPOLÉON III (1808-73) m EUGÉNIE DE MONTIJO
JOSEPH LUCIEN BONAPARTE (1824-65)
LUCIEN LOUIS BONAPARTE (1828-95)
NAPOLÉON CHARLES BONAPARTE (1839-99)
9 others
NAPOLÉON IV EUGÉNE (1856-79)
ZÉNAÏDE BONAPARTE (1860-62)
MARY BONAPARTE (1870-1947)
EUGÉNIE BONAPARTE (1872-1949)



Napoleon with the children of his family members, including the future Napoleon III on his knee



ELISA BONAPARTE
(1777-1820)
m
FÉLIX BACIOCCHI

4 children

CAROLINE BONAPARTE
(1782-1839)
m (1)
JOACHIM MURAT

ACHILLE MURAT
(1801-47)
m
CATHERINE WILLIS GRAY

3 others

BETSY PATTERSON
(1785-1879)

JÉRÔME BONAPARTE
(1784-1860)

CATHARINA OF WÜRTTEMBERG
(1783-1835)

JÉRÔME NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE
(1805-70)
m
SUSAN MAY WILLIAMS

JÉRÔME NAPOLÉON CHARLES BONAPARTE
(1814-47)

MATHILDE BONAPARTE
(1820-1904) *m (1)*
ANATOLY DEMIDOV, PRINCE OF SAN DONATO

PRINCE NAPOLÉON
(1822-91) *m.*
MARIE CLOTHILDE OF SAVOY

PAULINE BONAPARTE
(1780-1825)
m (1)
CHARLES LECLERC
m (2)
CAMILLO BORGHESE

NAPOLÉON IV VICTOR
(1862-1926) *m*
CLEMENTINE OF BELGIUM

NAPOLÉON LOUIS JOSEPH JÉRÔME BONAPARTE
(1864-1932)

MARIA LETIZIA BONAPARTE
(1866-1926) *m*
AMADEO OF SAVOY

JÉRÔME NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE II
(1830-93) *m*
CAROLINE EDGAR

CHARLES BONAPARTE
(1851-1921) *m.*
ELLEN CHANNING DAY

MARIE CLOTILDE BONAPARTE
(1912-1996)

NAPOLÉON VI LOUIS
(1914-1997) *m*
ALIX DE FORESTA

NAPOLÉON VII CHARLES
(b 1950)

CATHERINE ELISABETH BONAPARTE
(b 1950)

LAURE CLÉMENTINE BONAPARTE
(b 1952)

JÉRÔME XAVIER BONAPARTE
(b 1957)

CAROLINE BONAPARTE
(b 1980)

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE NAPOLÉON
(b 1986)

SOPHIE CATHÉRINE BONAPARTE
(b 1992)

ANH LAËTITIA BONAPARTE
(b 1998, adopted)

THE STAR OF NAPOLEON ASCENDANT

A once obscure army officer born on the island of Corsica rose to become a great conqueror and emperor of the French

Words **Michael Haskew**

Napoleon Bonaparte once said succinctly, "I found the crown of France on the ground, so I picked it up with the point of my sword."

In this instance, the emperor's comment was a supreme understatement. Perhaps the finest example of the self-made man of the 19th century, Napoleon did indeed rise from obscurity through the ranks of the French Army, navigating a maze of political intrigue, to become the foremost military strategist, tactician, and conqueror of his time, and to take on the mantle of Emperor of the French.

Napoleon's ascent to the dizzying heights of power is a remarkable, sometimes miraculous, and always fascinating thread that wove its way through world history for more than 30 years and continues to reverberate today. As with many men who rise to greatness, Napoleon was the beneficiary of turbulent times and sweeping political change, he was fortunate to receive an education beyond that of the common people, and he was possessed of tremendous intellect and driving ambition.

Napoleon was born in the town of Ajaccio, capital of the island of Corsica, on 15 August 1769. Just a year earlier, the Kingdom of Genoa had ceded Corsica to France. Had Napoleon been born a few months sooner, he would have grown up an Italian rather than a French citizen.

His parents were of the minor nobility, and his father, Carlo Buonaparte, served as the island's representative to the court of French King Louis XVI. His mother, Letizia Ramolino, was a strict disciplinarian and the foremost influence on the life of the young Napoleon. Although he was born Napoleone di Buonaparte, by the time he reached his 20s, he had changed his name to a more French spelling and pronunciation: Napoleon Bonaparte.

Napoleon was the second of seven children to survive beyond infancy. A boy and girl had died young, and one older brother, Joseph, preceded him. Napoleon studied at a Catholic school in the French city of Autun. He and Joseph travelled there in early 1779 in company with their father, who was en route to the French court at the Palace of Versailles.

It was often customary in society at the time for the second son of a noble family to pursue a career in the military. After only four months in Autun, Napoleon was accepted to the military academy at the town of Brienne-le-Chateau, where he studied for the next four years as his father was able to secure a scholarship to finance his education. Napoleon spoke Corsican as his first language and learned French during his schooling in the country.

After graduating from the Brienne military academy, Napoleon entered the École Militaire, an elite military academy located in the French capital of Paris. His father's untimely death in February 1785 brought financial hardship for his family, placing further education in jeopardy. However, Napoleon exhibited many innate personality traits that helped him persevere – traits that would also serve him well in later life. He was focused, intense, self-disciplined, and possessed incredible energy. Although he enjoyed being alone, he also cultivated friendships at the École Militaire. He was a meticulous planner, rarely leaving anything to chance in preparations for examinations or other activities.

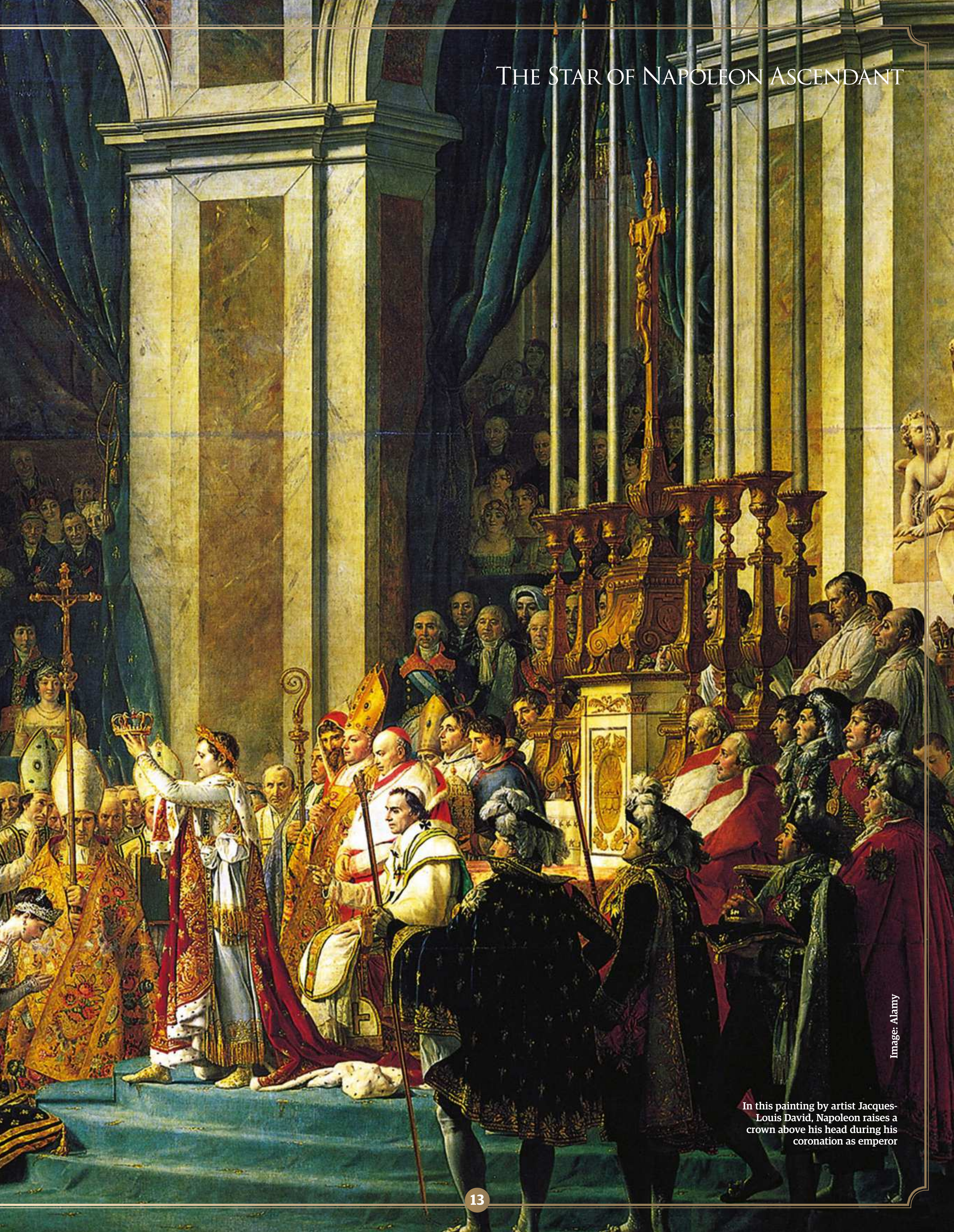


Image: Alamy

In this painting by artist Jacques-Louis David, Napoleon raises a crown above his head during his coronation as emperor

BONAPARTE RISING

Initially, Napoleon aspired to be a naval officer; however, an aptitude for mathematics pushed him toward the artillery. Out of necessity, he completed the school's two-year program in just one year, ranking a rather unimpressive 42nd in a class of 58 graduates.

The first Corsican to graduate from the prestigious École Militaire, Napoleon was commissioned a second lieutenant in the La Fére Regiment of artillery at the age of 16. Still, due to his somewhat low social status, the prospects for advancement were rather dismal. The rigid class structure of Bourbon France was a formidable barrier to promotion.

While the spark of the French Revolution smouldered, Napoleon completed further training in the city of Auxonne, where the French Army's artillery school was located. He was ordered to the city of Valence in southeastern France, where there was little activity related to his military vocation. He spent long hours reading, educating himself on the political landscape of the day, and absorbing great volumes of history, geography, and philosophy.

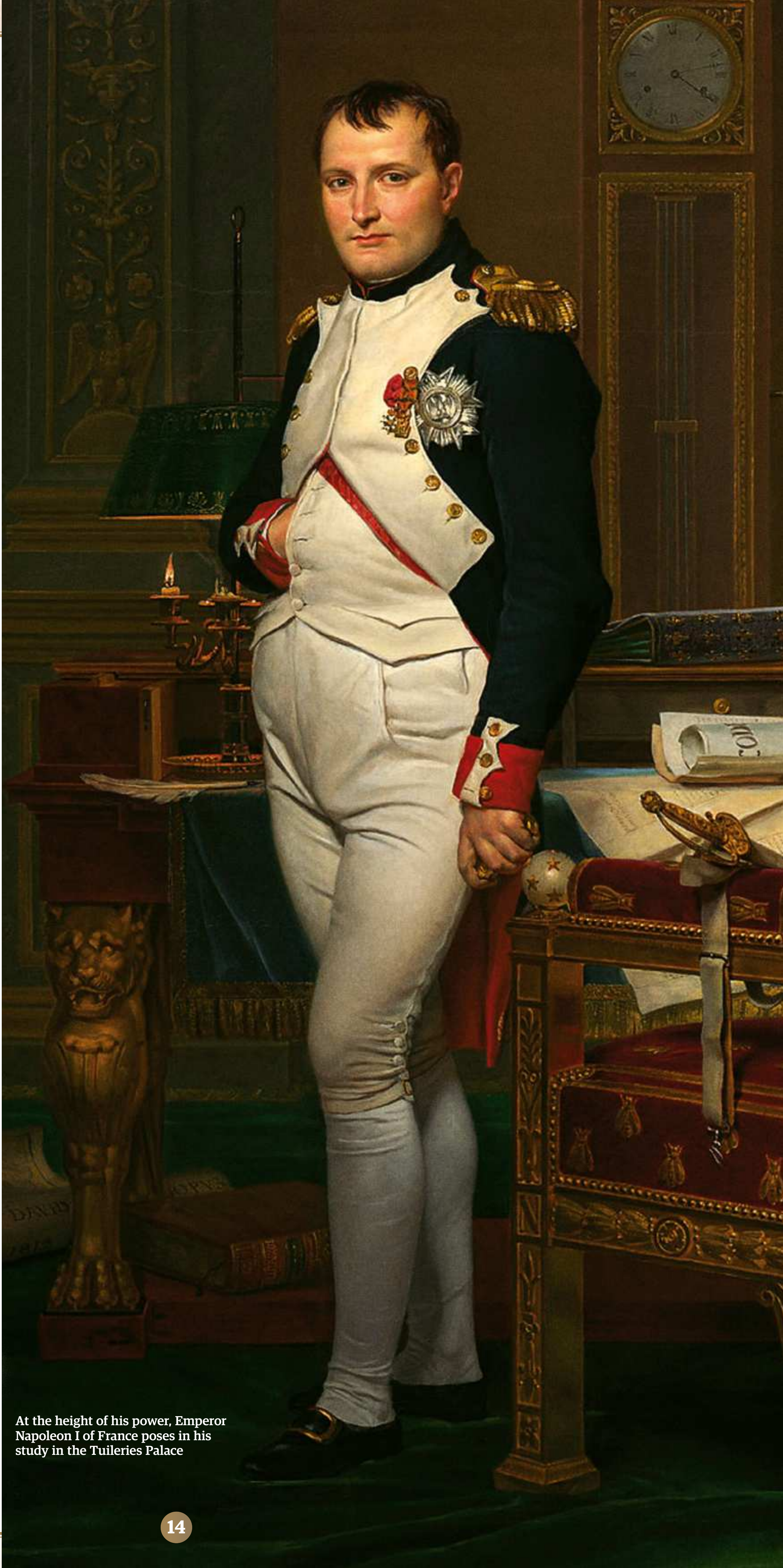
Napoleon took extended leaves from the army during a two-year period, visiting Paris and returning to his native Corsica. He was, no doubt, keenly aware of the political unrest that was emerging in France at the time. The poor, working class population of the country, particularly in its major cities, had become disenchanted and angry with its continuing exploitation by an aristocracy that lived in the lap of luxury, distant and apparently looking upon the common people with disdain.

PATRIOTISM, POLITICS, AND OPPORTUNITY

Perhaps Napoleon's personal experience on the fringe of the French nobility, where his own career path was obviously limited, his continuing self-education, and his strong attachment to his native island home cultivated an inherent Corsican nationalism in the young officer. In May 1789, before he had turned 20 years of age, he was a committed, ardent proponent of an independent Corsica and wrote an impassioned letter to Pasquale Paoli, the president of the Executive Council of the General Diet of the People of Corsica.

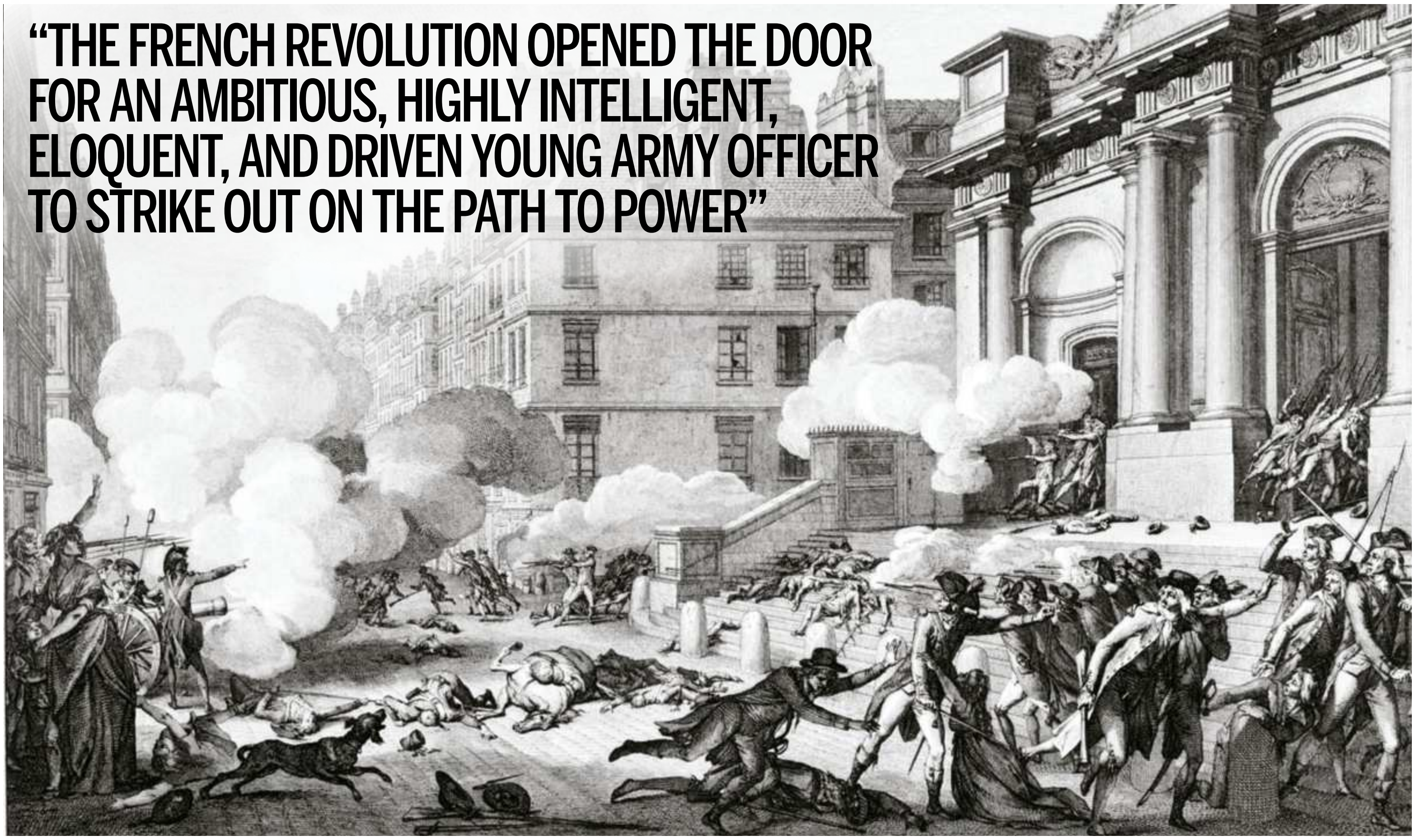
"As the nation was perishing I was born," Napoleon wrote. "30,000 Frenchmen were vomited onto our shores, drowning the throne of liberty in waves of blood. Such was the odious sight which was the first to strike me."

> "30,000 FRENCHMEN WERE VOMITED ONTO OUR SHORES, DROWNING THE THRONE OF LIBERTY IN WAVES OF BLOOD"



At the height of his power, Emperor Napoleon I of France poses in his study in the Tuileries Palace

> “THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OPENED THE DOOR FOR AN AMBITIOUS, HIGHLY INTELLIGENT, ELOQUENT, AND DRIVEN YOUNG ARMY OFFICER TO STRIKE OUT ON THE PATH TO POWER”

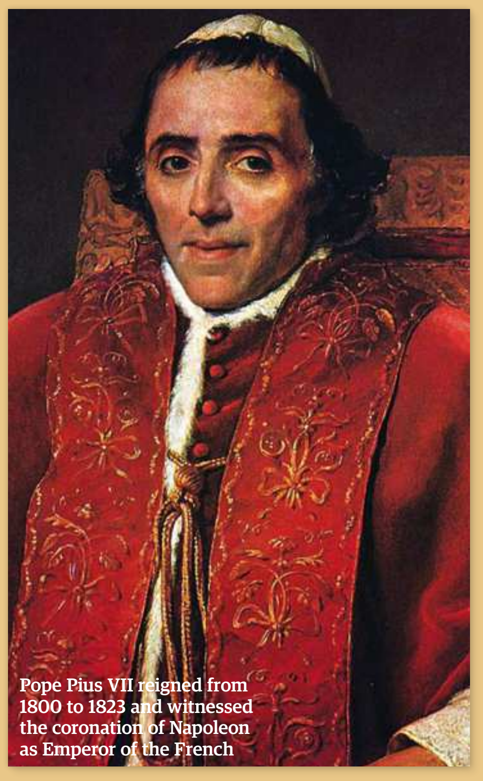


NAPOLEON AND THE CHURCH

Although Napoleon Bonaparte believed that the Roman Catholic Church favoured the Catholic monarchy of Austria over the revolutionary government of France, he never disavowed the institution and recognised its prominent role in the fabric of society. Napoleon was born and baptised Catholic, remained Catholic his entire life, and received the last rights of the church on his deathbed. Wherever he led conquering armies, Napoleon proved pragmatic and tolerant, respectful of different religious customs and allowing the native populations to continue their practices without interference.

Nevertheless, Napoleon’s personal religious views seem somewhat contradictory. Driven by insatiable ambition, he had gained an empire through force. Yet, later in life he is said to have admired the ability of Jesus Christ to influence the course of world events so profoundly with a message of love and salvation. Despite his Catholic upbringing, he once remarked, “All religions have been made by men.” Therefore, it is likely that Napoleon considered the freedom to express religion as a tool to extend control of the masses, contributing to his ultimate goal of building an unrivalled empire.

Scholars, however, remain divided as to whether Napoleon nurtured a real faith in God or simply used his ancestral bond to the Catholic Church to advance his agenda of conquest.



Pope Pius VII reigned from 1800 to 1823 and witnessed the coronation of Napoleon as Emperor of the French

In that same month, the discontent of the French people erupted in violent revolution. In Paris, the middle class moved to form a National Assembly that openly confronted the French monarchy, the aristocracy, and the administration of the Roman Catholic Church. Within weeks, an angry mob stormed the Bastille in Paris, prisoners were freed from their cells, and civil unrest spread rapidly.

Meanwhile, Napoleon engaged in the clash of rival factions in Corsica. Nationalists, radicals, and royalists vied for control of the island. Although he had supported an independent Corsica, the young officer disagreed with Paoli and began to lean toward a more democratic group, the Jacobins. Paoli, however, continued to advocate a complete severance of ties with France.

By 1792, the French monarchy had been toppled and the nation had been declared a republic. Despite the fact that he had spent long periods away from the army and actually led violent demonstrations against French troops in Corsica, Napoleon was promoted to captain in the French Army and returned to his regiment in the city of Nice. In June 1793, six months after King Louis XVI was publicly executed in the Place de la Révolution in Paris, the entire Bonaparte family fled its homeland and settled on the French mainland.

The French Revolution opened the door for an ambitious, highly intelligent, eloquent, and driven young army officer to strike out on the path to power. The Jacobin-inspired Reign of Terror, meant to exert control over a country wracked by revolution, counter-revolution, and rioting in the streets, also contributed to the removal of much of the aristocratic senior officer caste of the French Army. Further, the overthrow of the Bourbon Dynasty threatened the security and stability of the remaining monarchies of Europe.

As pangs of fear struck the hearts of rulers across the continent, the logical course of action appeared to be a military move against the French revolutionary government, a campaign that would restore the House of Bourbon to the French throne, quiet the upheaval in France, and squelch the ideas of political and social redress that had become so troublesome.

In 1792, the First Coalition, a loose alliance of Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, Russia, and other countries went to war against the French First Republic. Destitute of experienced senior military commanders and with its ranks populated by many soldiers who had little training, discipline, or experience, the French Army needed capable leadership. Conditions were becoming increasingly favourable for the rise of Napoleon.

In the summer of 1793, the young captain of artillery was posted to the city of Toulon on the Mediterranean coast. A powerful British fleet had sailed into the harbour, supporting an uprising of royalist sympathizers and effectively allowing ground forces to take control of the city. During the fighting in Toulon, the captain of the French artillery was wounded.

Through the influence of Antoine Saliceti, a political officer who had accompanied the army to Toulon and happened also to be a fellow Corsican and friend of the Bonaparte family, Napoleon was given command of the artillery in the city.

Meanwhile, commanders who were senior to Napoleon were proving themselves weak and inadequate. Napoleon's friendship with Saliceti and his contact with the governing Committee of Public Safety in Paris, including the powerful Augustin Robespierre, brought tacit approval for the young commander of artillery to prosecute the military effort at Toulon, despite the protests of General Jean Baptiste Francois Carteaux, the nominal officer in command.

Napoleon was promoted to the rank of major in September. His quick grasp of the tactical situation compelled him to write to the leaders in Paris that his superiors at Toulon were "a bunch of fools." Napoleon believed that the key to driving the British fleet from the harbour lay in capturing nearby heights and two fortifications, l'Eguillette and Balaguier. From there, the enemy warships would be within range of French guns and compelled to evacuate the harbour.

Carteaux had agreed but insisted on retaining command of the initial assault against British positions on the high ground. The attack was uninspired and ineffective. After the failure, Bonaparte assumed control of the continuing effort to take the key positions. Within days, Napoleon had constructed artillery emplacements to bombard the British fortifications. Then, on 16 December, he led another assault against the strong points.

During the attack, Napoleon received a serious bayonet wound in the thigh. Nevertheless, the objectives were captured, the enemy fleet withdrew from Toulon harbour, and the young lieutenant of artillery received tremendous praise for his conduct of the operation. He was rewarded with a great leap forward in rank, promotion to brigadier general at the age of only 24.

JACOBINS, JEOPARDY, AND TRIUMPH

By the spring of 1794, Napoleon had been elevated to command of the artillery of the Army of Italy, then battling Austria and the Kingdom of Sardinia in the mountains of northern Italy. Napoleon planned an offensive that would lead to a significant victory against the First Coalition at the Battle of Saorgio in April. The success of the campaign that followed forced the Austrians and Sardinians to sign a treaty with the French the following month.

The political situation in Paris remained in turmoil, however, and in July 1794 the Jacobinswere swiftly removed from power during the Thermidorian Reaction. Maximilien Robespierre, the central figure in the Reign of Terror, went to the guillotine, as did his brother Augustin, Napoleon's friend and benefactor. Napoleon, who was in Nice during this period, was placed under house arrest supposedly due to his association with the Robespierre brothers and other Jacobins. He is said to have penned a letter while under arrest, pleading with the National Convention for leniency in the case of his friend Saliceti, who was subsequently acquitted and escaped the guillotine.

Accounts of Napoleon's incarceration vary. Some assert that he was held under house arrest for as little as two weeks. Others state that he was imprisoned for several months, tried, and found guiltless of any crime. In fact, those who judged him were reported

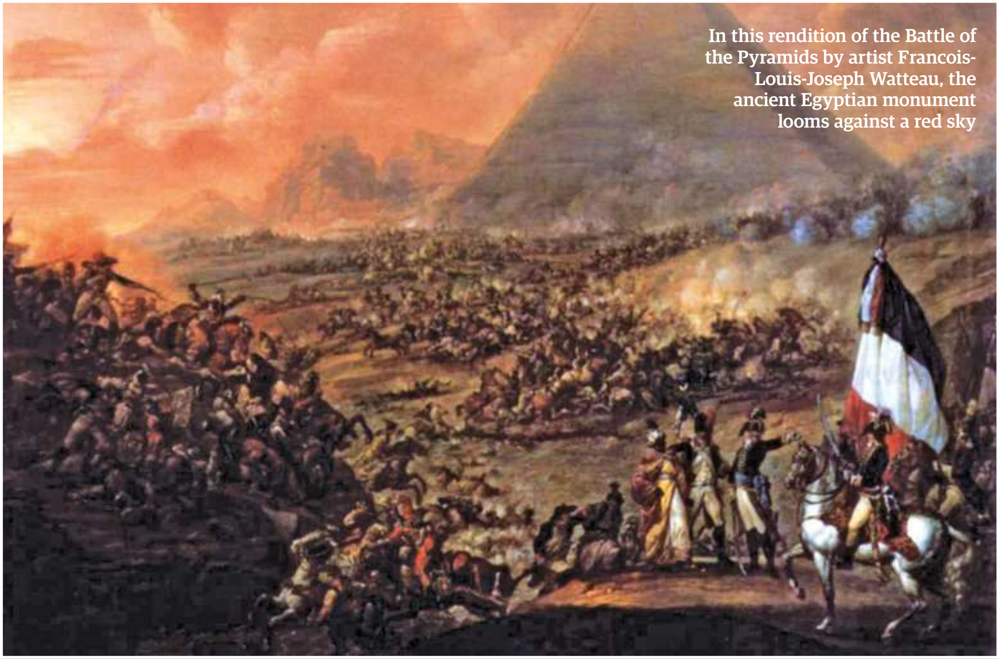
THE BATTLE OF THE PYRAMIDS

On 21 July 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte exhorted his troops as they went into battle against the Mamluk army commanded by Murad Bey and Ibrahim Bey. "Forward! Remember that from those monuments yonder 40 centuries are looking down upon you," he roared. The French victory at the Battle of the Pyramids, fought just a few miles from the ancient wonders and a short distance from the city of Cairo, sealed the temporary conquest of Egypt for France, although the campaign ultimately ended in disaster.

During the battle, Napoleon employed an effective battlefield tactic against the best of the Mamluk army, its strong cavalry formations. The French soldiers formed infantry squares, presenting a solid front against the charging Mamluk horsemen along with concentrated musketry and the points of bayonets.

With the aid of artillery fire, they repulsed multiple Mamluk charges while attacks against a detached French force were repelled as well. French casualties amounted to only 29 killed and 260 wounded, while Mamluk losses are believed to have topped 3,000.

Despite the one-sided victory, Napoleon's hopes of establishing an empire in the Middle East were dashed ten days later with the British Royal Navy's defeat of his fleet at the Battle of the Nile.



In this rendition of the Battle of the Pyramids by artist Francois-Louis-Joseph Watteau, the ancient Egyptian monument looms against a red sky

“AS THE ANGRY ROYALIST MOB APPROACHED THE TUILERIES ON 5 OCTOBER, NAPOLEON DID NOT FLINCH, ORDERING HIS COMMAND TO FIRE. WITHIN MINUTES AS MANY AS 1,400 ROYALISTS LAY DEAD AND DYING IN THE STREET”

to have been impressed with the officer's stellar military record. By 1795, Napoleon had returned to Paris and was assigned to the Bureau of Topography after feigning poor health to avoid an infantry command, a perceived demotion for an officer of artillery, in the Vendée region fighting the royalists.

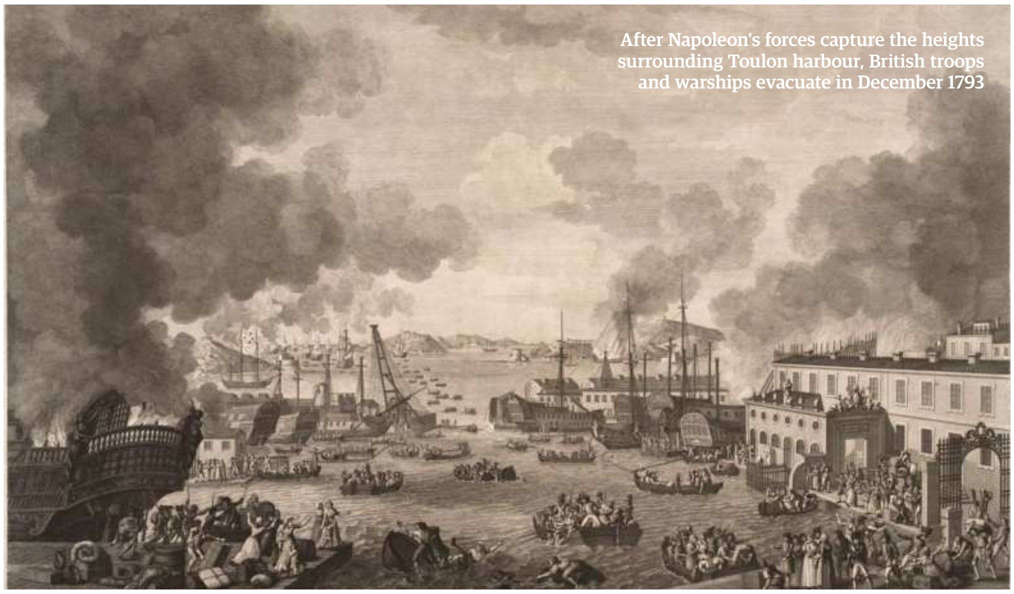
Although his exploits at Toulon had made Napoleon a national hero, his Jacobin political ties and refusal to serve in the Vendée campaign caused his reputation and career to suffer. He was haunted by financial hardship, and his name was removed from the roll of active general officers.

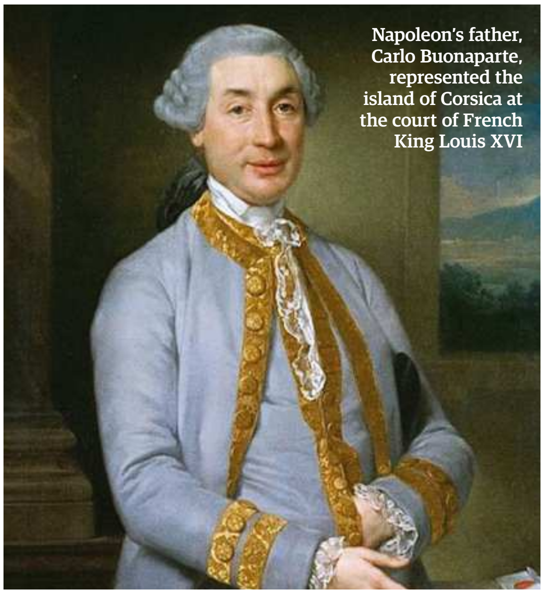
Once again, it seems that fate played a hand in the fortunes of the ambitious Corsican. On 3 October 1795, hundreds of Parisian royalists took to the streets intent on storming the Tuileries Palace, where the fragile government of the National Convention and the Directory had taken refuge. Paul Barras, a principal participant in the Thermidorian Reaction, remembered Napoleon's triumph at Toulon and placed the discredited general in charge of the defence of the Tuileries. Without hesitation, Napoleon seized the opportunity, ordering a young cavalry officer, Joachim Murat, to marshal troops and cannon for the fight that was to come.

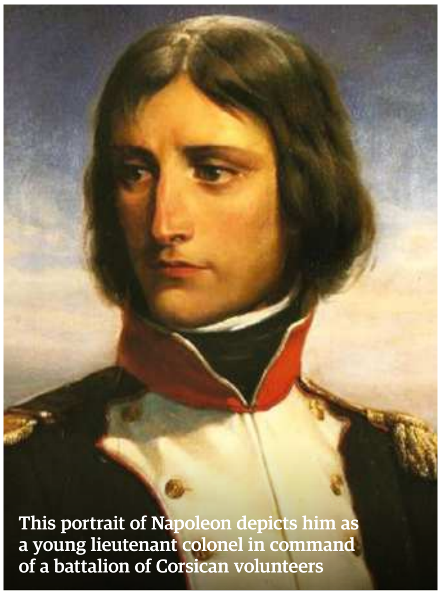
As the angry royalist mob approached the Tuileries on 5 October, Napoleon did not flinch, ordering his command to fire. Within minutes as many as 1,400 royalists lay dead and dying in the street. British historian Thomas Carlyle said the grim task was completed in “a whiff of grapeshot.”

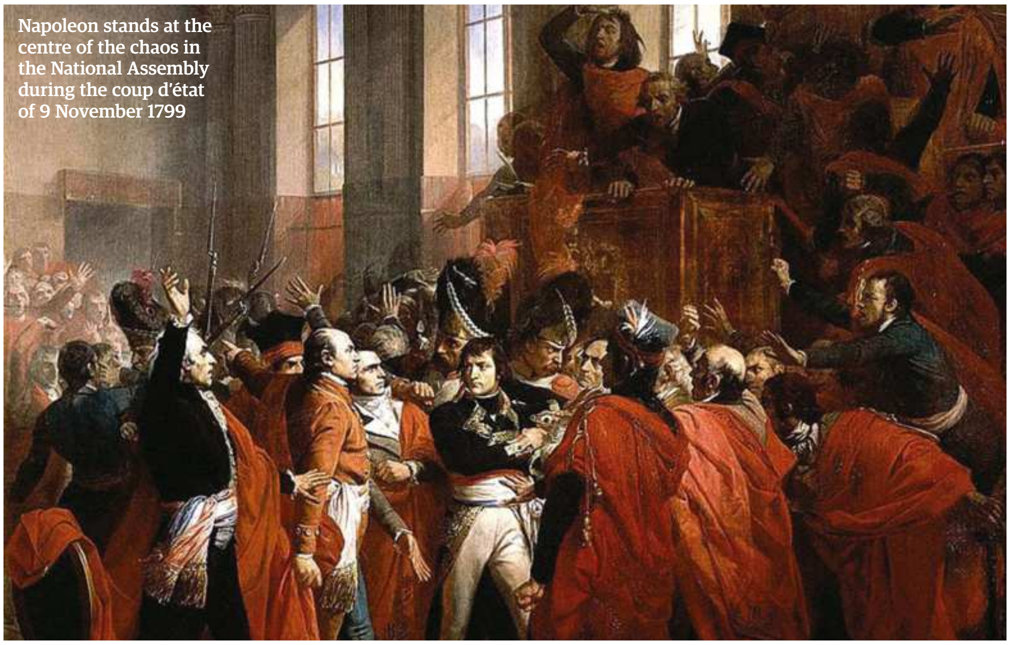
Napoleon earned the gratitude of the National Convention and the Directory along with the undying loyalty of Murat, who later became one of his senior commanders. He was soon named Commander of the Interior and placed at the head of the Army of Italy. Simultaneously, a romantic liaison blossomed with Joséphine de Beauharnais, an aristocratic widow whose husband had been guillotined during the Reign of Terror and the former mistress of Barras. Napoleon and Joséphine were married five months later.

The honeymoon was brief. On 11 March 1796, two days after the couple married, Napoleon set off


After Napoleon's forces capture the heights surrounding Toulon harbour, British troops and warships evacuate in December 1793


Napoleon's father, Carlo Buonaparte, represented the island of Corsica at the court of French King Louis XVI


This portrait of Napoleon depicts him as a young lieutenant colonel in command of a battalion of Corsican volunteers


Napoleon stands at the centre of the chaos in the National Assembly during the coup d'état of 9 November 1799

to take command of the Army of Italy, a fighting force that few military men considered a capable offensive weapon. Poorly equipped, many of the soldiers were without proper uniforms - or even pants. Nevertheless, Napoleon displayed superb organisational skills and initiated a swift campaign against the Austrian Army in Italy. Rapid movement kept the enemy on its heels, and the army of Piedmont, an Austrian ally, was vanquished in just over two weeks.

A string of four successive victories culminated in January 1797 with a decisive triumph at Rivoli, where the Austrians lost 14,000 casualties. The Austrian position in Italy then became untenable, and Napoleon boldly mounted an expedition into the enemy's homeland. After defeating the Austrians at the Battle of Tarvis in March 1797, the French threatened their capital of Vienna. The Austrians made peace overtures and ceded much of northern Italy and the Low Countries to France with the Treaty of Campo Formio, signed in mid-October.

Napoleon's masterstroke against Austria precipitated the collapse of the First Coalition. After the Treaty Campo Formio, only Great Britain remained as an active opponent of the French armed forces. Soon enough, however, the Second Coalition would rise to challenge the French commander whose military genius was now proven on the battlefield. Napoleon had gained the admiration and loyalty of his troops and acclaim from the French people while earning the nickname of the 'Little Corporal', since he was never far from the fighting.

At the same time, he often took unilateral action, negotiating on his own without the authority of the government in Paris. In the process, he solidified a belief in himself as a man of destiny. Parisian politicians were dazzled with his success but wary of this general who marched confidently with a powerful army at his shoulder.

While Britain remained in opposition, Napoleon devised a daring offensive fraught with risk that might ultimately result in complete victory. The conquest of Egypt was, he reasoned, a stepping stone to threaten British interests in India. The French Army would establish itself in the Middle East and forge an anti-British alliance with Muslim rulers that would inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy.

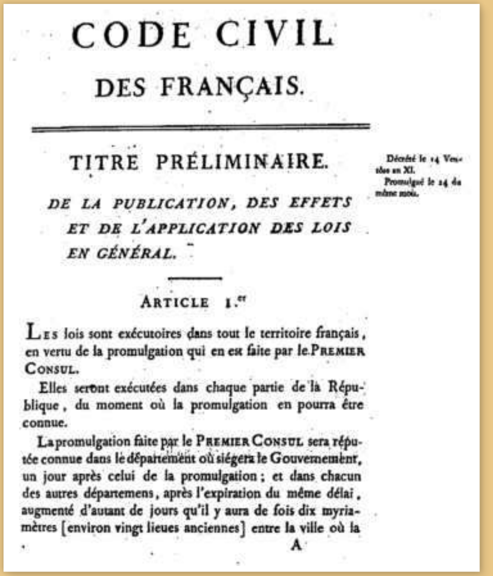
Napoleon did successfully invade Egypt in early 1798, but the French Navy was unable to exert control of the Mediterranean Sea. It suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Lord Horatio Nelson and the Royal Navy at the Battle of the Nile in August. Subsequently, the French Army in the Middle East was marooned and without a secure supply line. An advance into Syria ended with the failed siege of Acre in 1799, which lasted for two months before the French retreated from the Ottoman-defended city.

While his army languished in Egypt, eventually surrendering to the British, Napoleon received word that political unrest had again heated up in Paris. Ever the opportunist, he left the troops to their fate, slipped across the Mediterranean, and joined a conspiracy to overthrow the Directory and to seize power in France.

THE NAPOLEONIC CODE

The Napoleonic Code, established in 1804 during the rule of Emperor Napoleon I, embodied an effort to codify in law many of the principles of the French Revolution. Inspired by ancient Roman law developed in the time of Emperor Justinian, the Napoleonic Code was divided into four sections relating to persons, property, acquisition of property, and civil procedure. It effectively replaced the variety of feudal laws across France with a standardised system. The code promised equality for all people, asserting that individuals have the right to pursue any type of occupation and ensuring religious freedom. It ended a lengthy system of feudal and royal law that often favoured one party through exemptions, special orders, or privileges.

In a clear departure from earlier applications of law in France and throughout much of Europe, the Napoleonic Code clarified legal authority and applied both specific authority and restrictions on judges. Its influence extended beyond France and into the lands that Napoleon conquered. The code was formally adopted in several European countries, including Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Portugal. Drafts of the code were begun as early as 1793 and adopted over a number of years. However, Napoleon pursued the effort with vigour when the Consulate came to power in 1799.



CODE CIVIL

DES FRANÇAIS.

TITRE PRÉLIMINAIRE.

DE LA PUBLICATION, DES EFFETS ET DE L'APPLICATION DES LOIS EN GÉNÉRAL.

Décrété le 14 Ventôse an XI.
Promulgué le 24 du même mois.

ARTICLE 1.er

LES lois sont exécutoires dans tout le territoire français, en vertu de la promulgation qui en est faite par le PREMIER CONSUL.

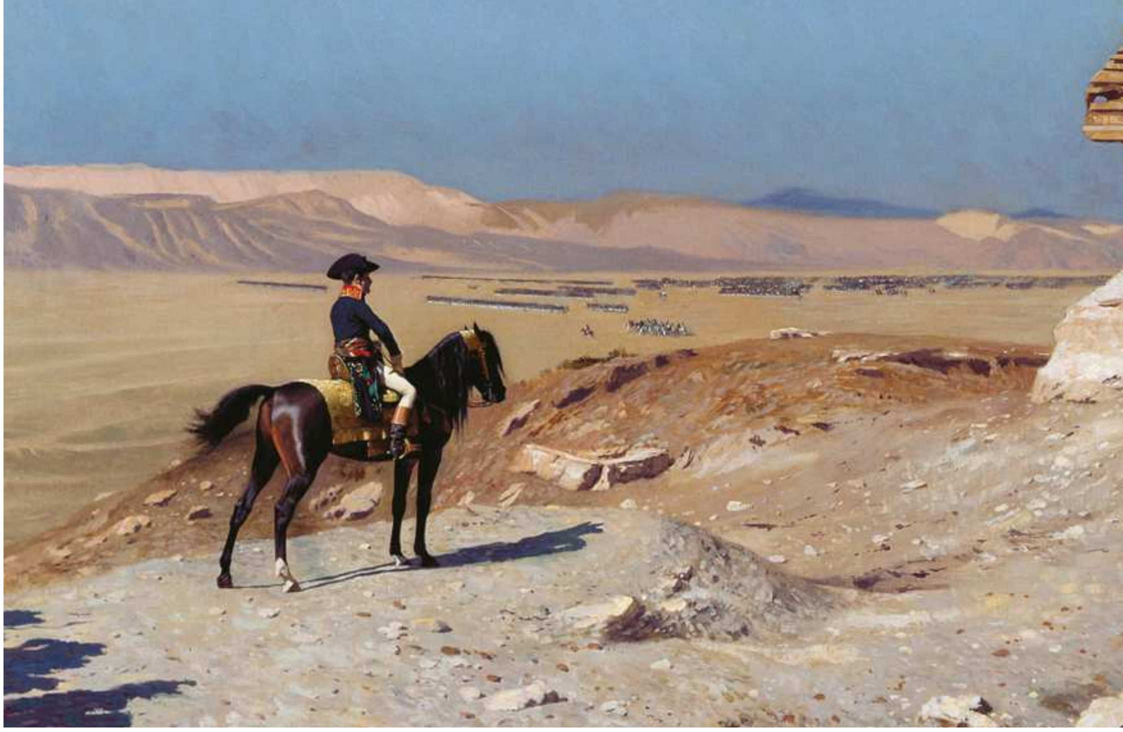
Elles seront exécutées dans chaque partie de la République, du moment où la promulgation en pourra être connue.

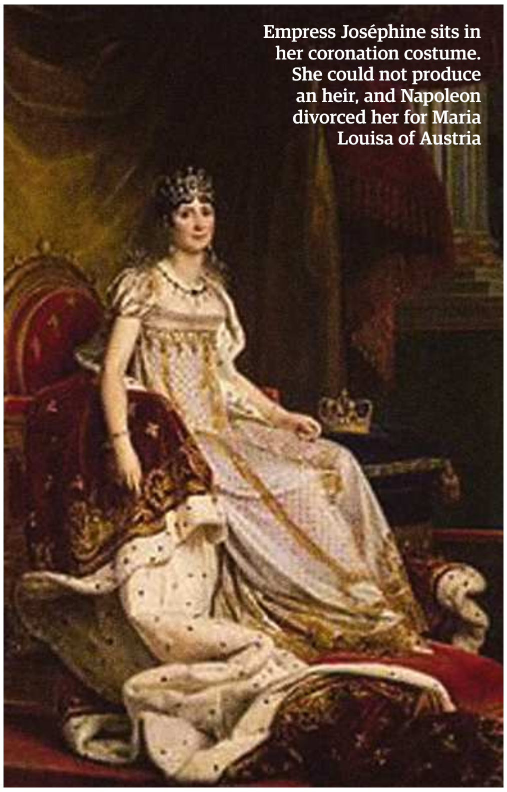
La promulgation faite par le PREMIER CONSUL sera réputée connue dans le département où siégera le Gouvernement, un jour après celui de la promulgation; et dans chacun des autres départemens, après l'expiration du même délai, augmenté d'autant de jours qu'il y aura de fois dix myriamètres [environ vingt lieues anciennes] entre la ville où la

A

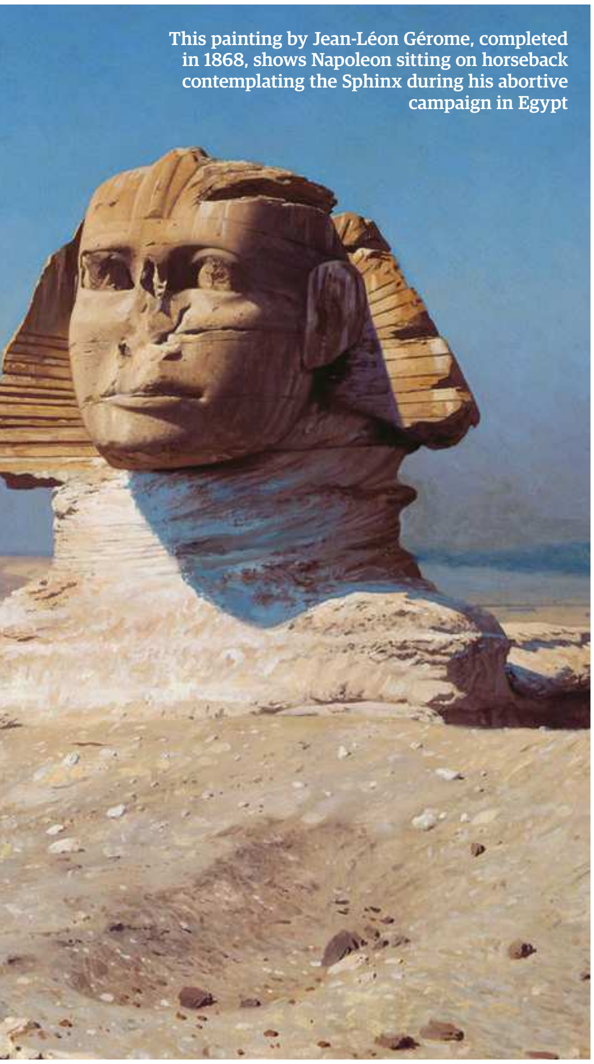
The first page of this 1804 edition of the Napoleonic Code introduces it as the Civil Code of the French

> "NAPOLEON HAD GAINED THE ADMIRATION AND LOYALTY OF HIS TROOPS AND ACCLAIM FROM THE FRENCH PEOPLE WHILE EARNING THE NICKNAME OF THE 'LITTLE CORPORAL', SINCE HE WAS NEVER FAR FROM THE FIGHTING"





Empress Joséphine sits in her coronation costume. She could not produce an heir, and Napoleon divorced her for Maria Louisa of Austria



This painting by Jean-Léon Gérome, completed in 1868, shows Napoleon sitting on horseback contemplating the Sphinx during his abortive campaign in Egypt

FROM CONSPIRACY TO THE CROWN AND AN EMPIRE

While Napoleon's ill-conceived foray into Egypt foundered, the so-called War of the Second Coalition had gone badly for France in Europe as well. Much of the territorial gains made in Italy had been lost in recent months, and the military reverses contributed to the flagging popularity of the Directory.

By the time Napoleon reached Paris in October 1799, the military situation had somewhat stabilised, but France was virtually bankrupt. It was apparent that government was on the verge of collapse. The Directory had sent orders for Napoleon to return to France to defend the homeland against invasion, but he departed Egypt before those orders arrived. Although he had essentially deserted his post, the Directory was too weak-willed to impose any punishment.

Despite the defeat in Egypt, Napoleon continued to enjoy extraordinary popularity with the French people. The time for a coup d'état had arrived, and the conspirators, several members of the Directory among them, approached Napoleon to participate. On 9 November 1799, the conspirators overthrew the Directory, and the event became known as the '18th Brumaire' in reference to the revolutionary calendar.

The government that replaced the Directory was known as the Consulate, a classical reference to the Roman Republic. Along with Napoleon, two former members of the Directory, Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès and Pierre-Roger Ducos, joined the military hero as consuls. True to form, however, Napoleon had no taste for cooperative government. Within weeks, the influence of Sieyès and Ducos had been extinguished. Although the government maintained the semblance of a republic, Napoleon was supreme in the role of First Consul.

While he consolidated power in France, giving only a nod through a rigged plebiscite to the representative form of government and political ideals that had been unleashed during the Revolution, Napoleon faced a very real external threat. Eager to assert dominance, he moved militarily against the Second Coalition.

Napoleon advanced once again toward the Austrians in Italy. At the Battle of Marengo on 14 June 1800, a surprise Austrian attack came close to inflicting a terrible defeat on Napoleon's army. Austrian commander General Michael von Melas broke the French lines, but made the mistake of ordering rather incapable subordinates to pursue the retreating forces. In fact, the French had performed a tactical withdrawal. By late afternoon, Napoleon had rallied his men and executed a successful counterattack, defeating the Austrians and further legitimizing his hold on political power in Paris. Napoleon returned to his capital in triumph, and an agreement with Austria brought northern Italy, the Netherlands, and lands on the left bank of the great River Rhine into the French fold.

> **"DESPITE THE DEFEAT IN EGYPT, NAPOLEON CONTINUED TO ENJOY EXTRAORDINARY POPULARITY WITH THE FRENCH PEOPLE"**

By 1802, a classic military standoff had developed. While Great Britain's Royal Navy ruled the high seas, Napoleon and the French Army were preeminent on land. The two powers signed the Treaty of Amiens on 25 March 1802, each side offering assurances to the other, and a brief, uneasy peace settled across the European continent after ten years of almost constant warfare.

In the same year, Napoleon called for a plebiscite to approve the country's constitution as a means of making the Consulate a permanent governing entity. With overwhelming approval from the people, the plebiscite essentially proclaimed Napoleon First Consul for Life. For a time, Napoleon was afforded the opportunity to manage his country's colonial empire and settle territorial disputes that had plagued the Germanic principalities and free cities for years. Napoleon garnered the loyalty of numerous German princes and noblemen as he gave them additional lands and curtailed the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, which he considered somewhat hostile to revolutionary France. To replenish his depleted coffers, he sold the vast Louisiana Territory in North America to the United States for $15 million in 1803 - a deal that doubled the young nation's size at less than three cents an acre.

Meanwhile, the tenuous peace of Amiens fell apart. By the spring of 1803, Great Britain had again declared war on France. The slow assemblage of the Third Coalition eventually pitted Great Britain, Russia, Sweden, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily against France and allied dominions. The ensuing Napoleonic Wars would ravage Europe until 1815.

Still, Napoleon sought to attain absolute power in France, warning that a movement was afoot to restore the Bourbon monarchy and using failed assassination plots, both real and imagined, to endear himself to the French people. Finally, he asserted that power by proclaiming himself Emperor of the French.

At the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris on Sunday 2 December 1804, the improbable rise of Napoleon Bonaparte culminated with his coronation as Emperor Napoleon I. Reminiscent of the Caesars of ancient Rome, the emperor wore a gold laurel wreath. Rather than crowning the monarch, Pope Pius VII was merely a spectator. Napoleon needed no validation beyond his own self-assurance that his destiny had been fulfilled.

EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE BETRAYING NAPOLEON

The illicit love affairs of Napoleon Bonaparte's first wife

Words **Melanie Clegg**

In later years, when she was the glamorous and soignée Empress of the French, Joséphine would enjoy telling the much-embellished story of how, as a young girl, she visited a Créole wise woman who predicted that she would one day be "greater than a Queen". To the young Joséphine, the eldest daughter of impoverished plantation owners, this prediction must have seemed almost laughable. As the flattered and celebrated wife of Napoleon I, it was just another part of the Bonaparte mythology that reinforced the idea that their rise to power had been down to more than just talent and luck, but had instead been their destiny.

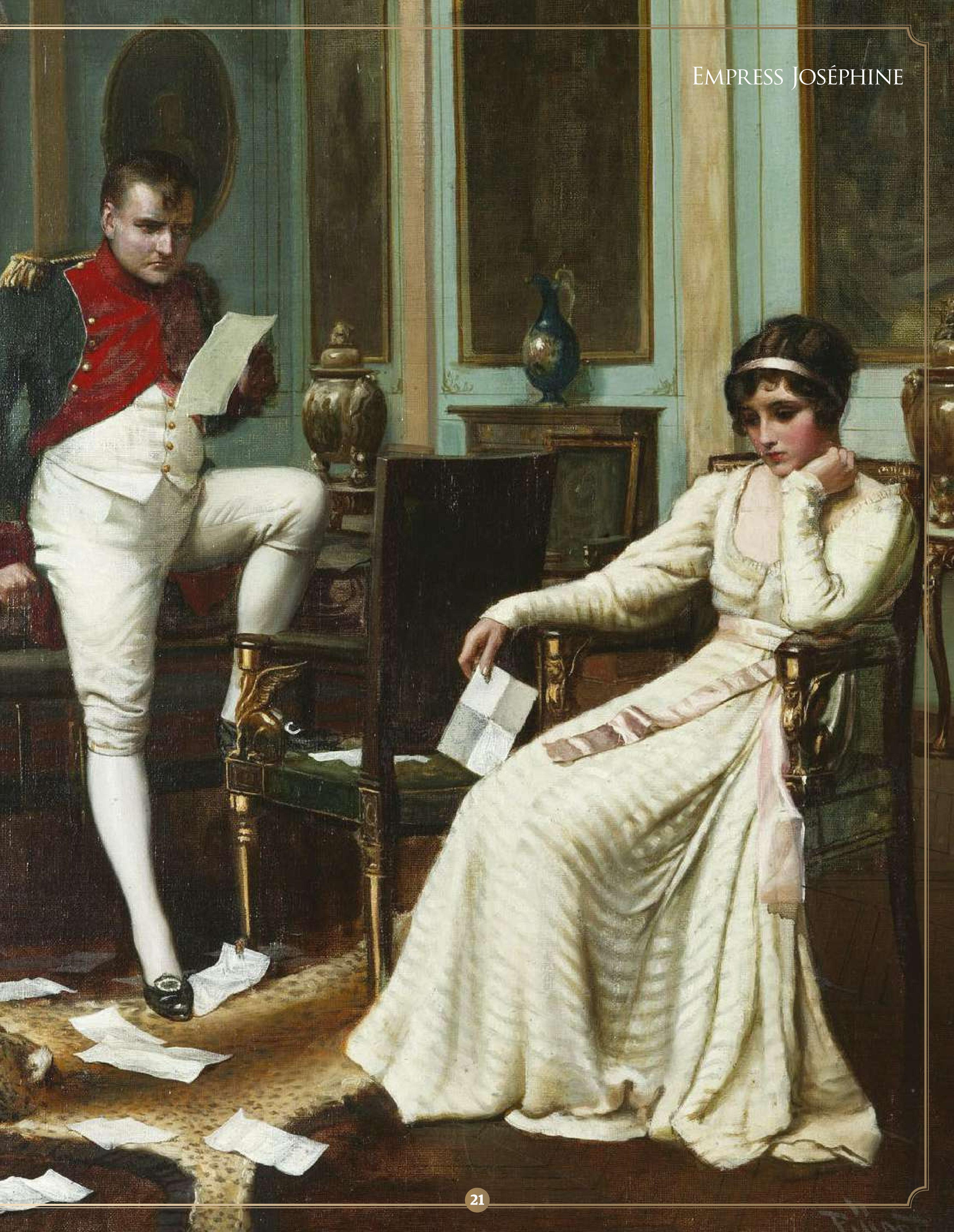
Born on 23 June 1763 in the town of Les Trois-Îlets, Martinique, Marie Josèphe Rose Tascher de la Pagerie and her two younger sisters ought to have enjoyed a pampered existence, attending balls, wearing pretty dresses and anticipating comfortable lives as wives to wealthy plantation owners. But thanks to a series of bad business decisions and natural disasters, the Tascher de la Pagerie family was constantly on the brink of financial ruination and in permanent danger of losing what little social standing they still retained on the island. The situation was further complicated by the fact that Joséphine's maternal aunt, Désirée, had absconded to Paris several years earlier and was known to be the mistress of the marquis de la Ferté-Beauharnais. This turned out to be a stroke of luck for the Tascher de la Pagerie clan back home in Martinique for when Désirée's lover started looking around for a wife for his youngest son, Alexandre, vicomte de Beauharnais, she was able to point him in the direction of her three nieces.

At first it was the middle daughter, Catherine, who was the destined bride-to-be, but she died of tuberculosis shortly before leaving for France. Her elder sister, Marie Josèphe – known as Rose – was hastily substituted and found herself on her way to a new life in Paris in autumn 1779. Although Alexandre was rather less than impressed by the unsophisticated appearance of his 16-year-old bride, he was in no position to disobey his father's wishes and the young couple were duly married shortly after Rose's arrival in Paris.

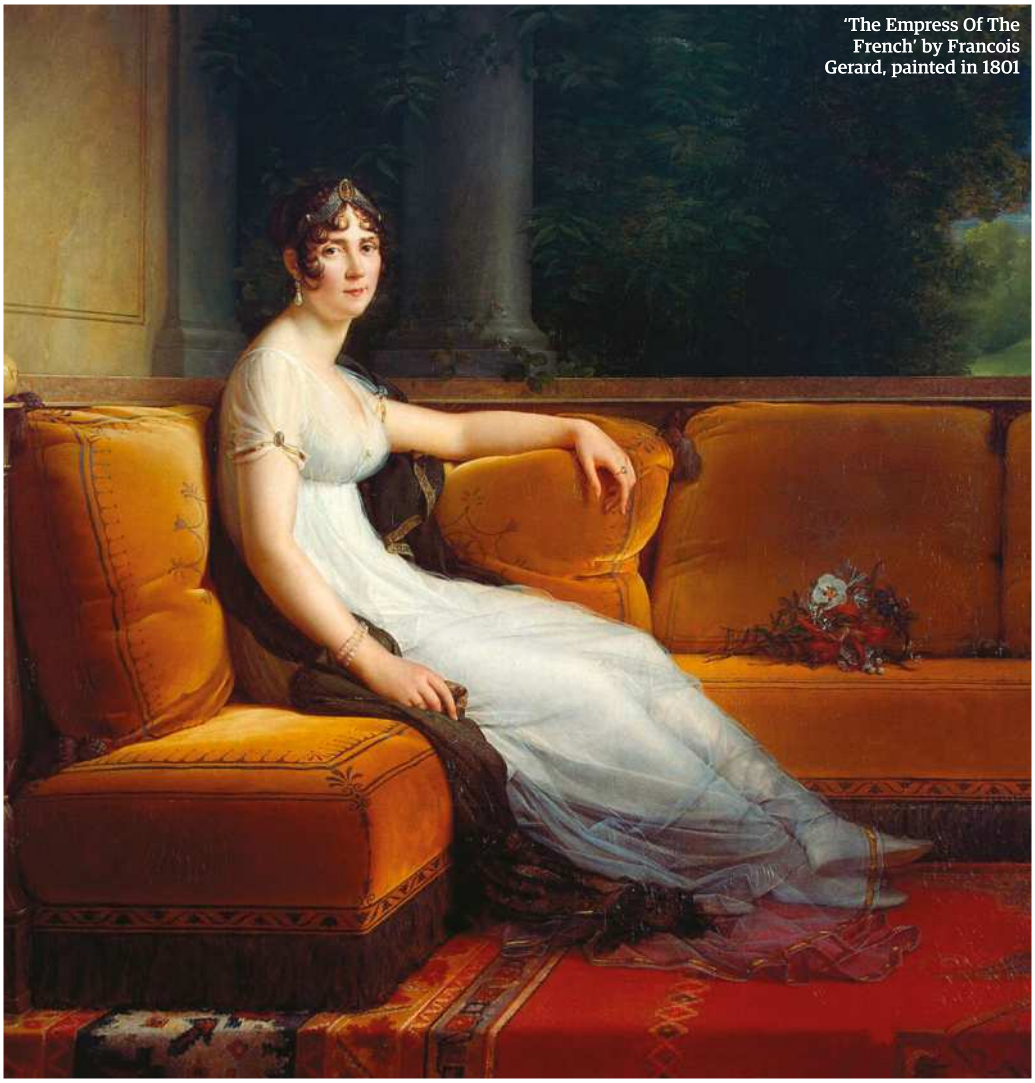
Despite its beginnings and her new husband's clear disdain for her, Rose tried her best to make the marriage work, motivated both by her own good nature but also by the fact that she had fallen head over heels in love with him. For a while it seemed like he might be making the best of the situation by taking Rose on as a project. However, this wasn't enough to keep his interest. The new vicomtesse de Beauharnais still failed to live up to the sophisticated, worldly and much older society ladies that her husband preferred to dally with. He quickly returned to his old ways, taking unsuitable mistresses and appearing at the balls at Versailles.

Effectively abandoned by her husband and excluded from his giddy lifestyle, Rose struggled to fit into her new life in Paris. She managed to find some contentment when her son, Eugène, was born in September 1781, followed by his sister, Hortense, in April 1783. However, the birth of Hortense, who arrived a few weeks earlier than expected, caused even more problems for Rose. Her husband's mistress used the baby's premature arrival to convince Alexandre that the she couldn't possibly be his daughter because she was clearly conceived at a time when he wasn't with his wife. A trip to Martinique, during which Alexandre encouraged his wife's old servants and friends to heavily embroider and embellish certain old rumours about her past only served to seal the rupture between husband and wife and they separated shortly after his return to France.

Despite being deeply traumatic, the separation turned out to be the making of Rose as she settled into her new life in the Penthemont convent. It was a well-known retreat for aristocratic ladies who had



"THEY SPENT THEIR DAYS FLIRTING, PLAYING CARDS, GOSSIPING AND PERFORMING PRETEND EXECUTIONS"



'The Empress Of The French' by Francois Gerard, painted in 1801

fallen upon hard times, and the most expensive and fashionable boarding school in Paris. Although she was initially daunted by the uncertain situation that she had found herself in, Rose was quickly taken under the wing of several other ladies in the same position. With their gentle encouragement she was eventually transformed into the elegant, soignée and sophisticated Parisian lady of fashion that her estranged husband had always hoped that she would be. The fact that she was of Créole background only worked to her advantage as it gave her newly found refinement and extremely alluring langour that made her irresistible to men - although she did her best to hide the fact that she was essentially penniless.

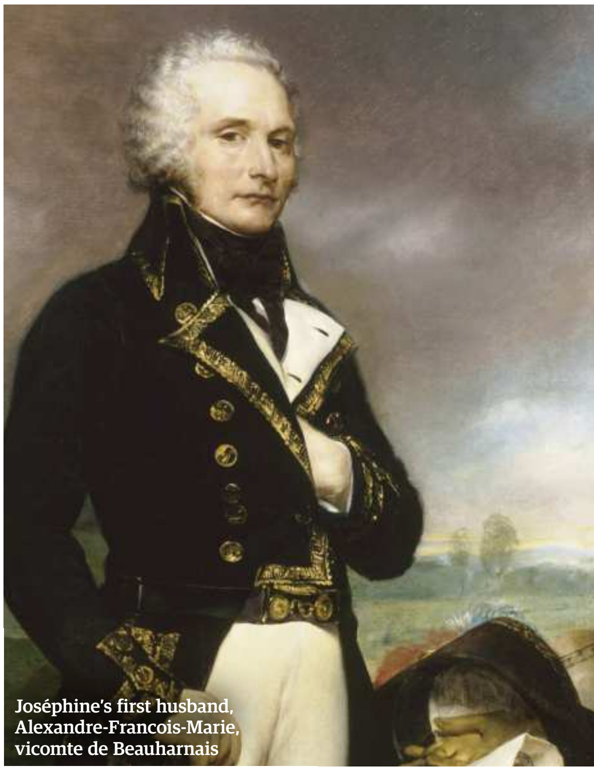
However, upon the dawn of the French Revolution, Rose was as implicated as her estranged husband. Despite his success as the president of the National Assembly, his aristocratic roots were never totally forgotten. He became highly suspect to the newly powerful and more extremist Jacobin politicians and was accused of treason following his loss of the city of Mainz in early 1794. He was duly imprisoned upon his return to Paris and after Rose pleaded - unsuccessfully - for his release, drawing unwelcome attention to her own background and association with numerous well-known royalists, she swiftly followed him into prison.

The Beauharnais couple were relatively fortunate in that they were held in the Carmes prison, one of the more salubrious Parisian places of detention during the Terror. They spent their days flirting, playing cards, gossiping, putting on plays and, perhaps oddly, performing pretend executions with a fake judge and jury who sentenced them to 'death'. A mostly harmless, if macabre, diversion, but for Rose it proved to be a rehearsal for the real thing when Alexandre was taken away to the more fearsome Conciergerie prison in July 1794, put on trial and guillotined a few days later.

As it seemed to be usual during the Terror for married couples to be tried and executed together, Rose spent the next few days in a state of abject dread, convinced that she too was about to be summoned to the guillotine. It's likely that this would have happened had not Robespierre and his followers been overthrown just five days after Alexandre de Beauharnais' execution, and the Terror brought to a sudden halt.

Rose was quickly released from Carmes thanks to the intervention of her closest friend, the notorious aristocratic beauty Thérésa Cabarrus. The Paris that she had known before the Terror had vanished. Instead, she faced a whole new world where the old nobility had been replaced by a new rising bourgeoisie class, and politics rather than court gossip was the main topic of conversation. Although virtually everyone had lost someone to the horrors of the Terror, the mood in Paris was far from sombre. The pace of life was hectic, frivolous and exciting, with everyone keen to spend money, have fun and celebrate being alive.

As best friend of the popular Madame Tallien, Rose found herself in demand for all the most fashionable social gatherings, while her position as the widow (albeit estranged) of the handsome, tragic vicomte de Beauharnais gave her a glamorous aura and opened aristocratic doors that had ironically been closed to her during his lifetime. Rose was in her early 30s now and although she was adroit at looking every inch the frivolous, beautifully dressed woman about town, it was a strain keeping up appearances with her limited means. She also had two young children to provide for and a whole host of charitable interests - all of which were a drain upon her very small income. Although she doubtless enjoyed



Joséphine's first husband, Alexandre-Francois-Marie, vicomte de Beauharnais

The Court of Cassation of France, the place Rose and her first husband, Alexandre were held prior to his execution

her independence, it was becoming increasingly imperative that she find another husband who would be able to to keep her in the manner to which she had become accustomed and also look after her children.

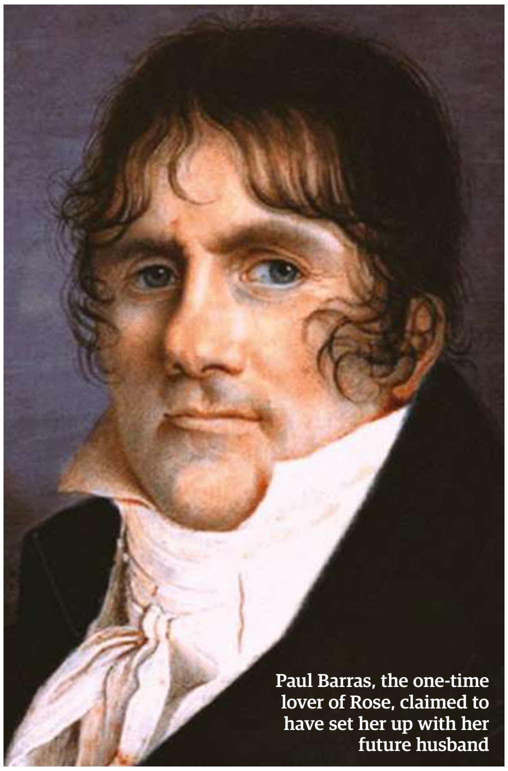
She started a relationship with Paul Barras, leader of the post-Thermidorian Directory government, a powerful and influential man who could boost her status and pay for her jewels and dresses.

One autumn evening in 1795, Barras took his latest protegé, an ambitious young Corsican army officer called Napoleon Bonaparte to a party at Rose's house on the Rue Chantereine. Afterwards, Barras would claim that he had always intended to do a little matchmaking between his mistress and Bonaparte, believing that they would find an association mutually beneficial.

The gauche and unpolished Napoleon needed a way into the influential high society set of Thérésa Tallien, while Rose was in desperate need of a husband and father for her two children. Napoleon may have been sallow, short and socially awkward, but he was talented enough to have been made Commander of the Interior. For Napoleon, who was shy and inexperienced around women, the charming Rose de Beauharnais was the epitome of femininity, and the fact that she paid him attention while others completely ignored him only served to increase his passion for her.

However, as far as Rose was concerned, Napoleon was just an amusing distraction and not at all the sort of man that she was attracted to. He was too abrupt and scruffy to really appeal to her, but his graceless behaviour and brusque manner made her laugh and his intense adoration was obvious. It's not known when precisely Rose first invited her latest suitor to her bed, but it probably happened shortly after their first meeting and prompted the couple's first exchange of letters in which Rose assured her lover that she was 'tenderly attached' to him and chided him for not visiting often enough. He responded with the assurance of, "No one desires your friendship as much as I do." It was also at this time that Napoleon, who already had a habit of changing his girlfriend's names, decided to start addressing Rose as Joséphine, who went along with it and was known by no other name from this point on.

As the months went by, Napoleon became increasingly enamoured with Joséphine. The tone of his letters started to reflect this. "I awake all filled with you. Your image and the intoxicating



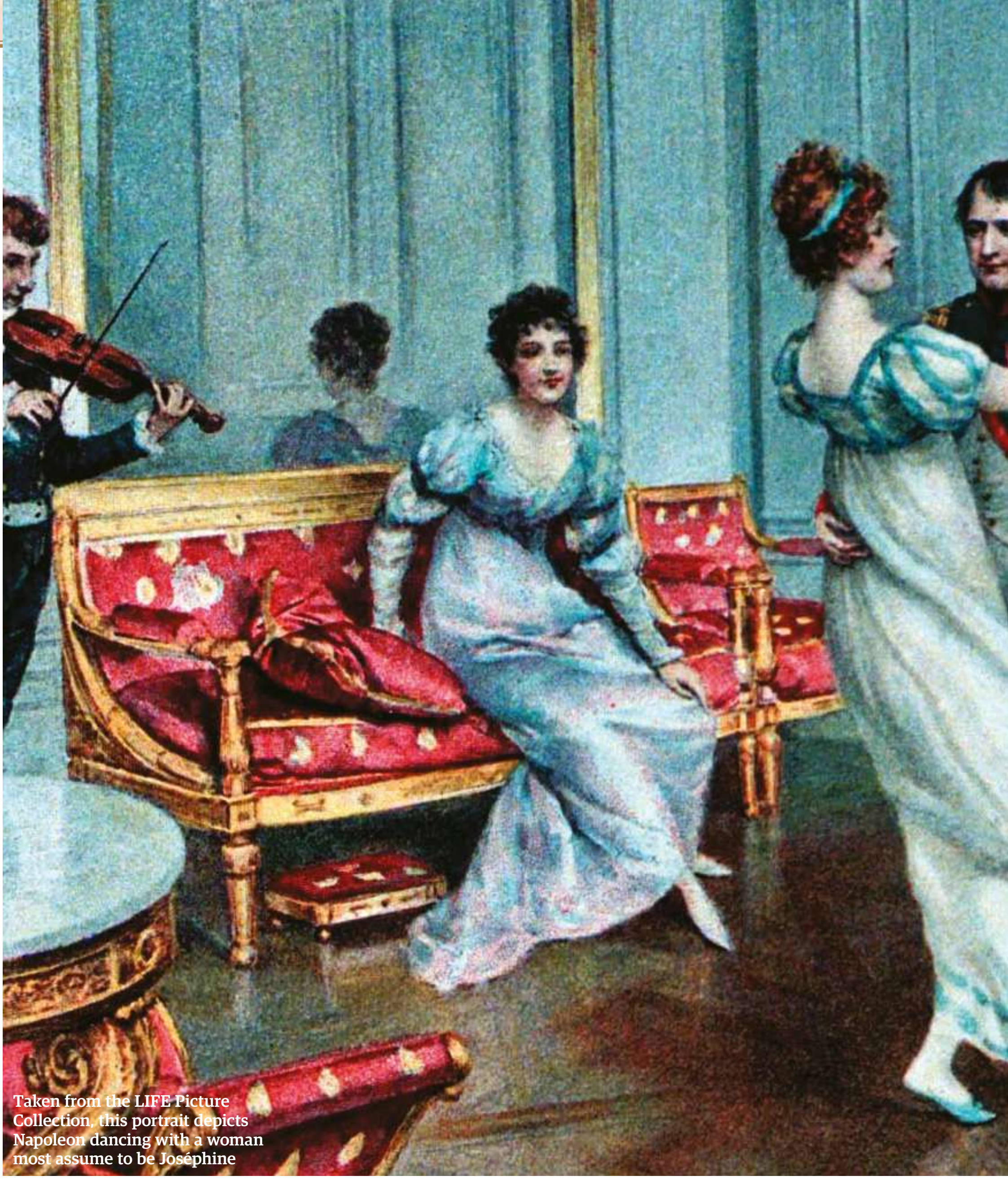
Paul Barras, the one-time lover of Rose, claimed to have set her up with her future husband

> “SHE MADE IT CLEAR THAT SHE VIEWED THE MARRIAGE AS A BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT”

pleasures of last night, allow my senses no rest. Sweet and matchless Joséphine, how strangely you work upon my heart… My soul is broken with grief and my love for you forbids repose… in three hours I shall see you again. Till then, a thousand kisses, bio dolce amor! But give me none back for they set my blood on fire.” Unsurprisingly, it wasn’t long before his thoughts began to turn to marriage - after all, she was not just his perfect woman in appearance and behaviour but she was also his way into influential and aristocratic circles that he would otherwise have no hope of entering.

Predictably, however, Joséphine was rather less keen to commit to her suitor. Barras and Thérésa had to persuade her as to the benefits of the match, which would provide her with the security that she needed. There was also her children to consider - Eugène and Hortense were adolescents now and the costs of educating them and preparing them for the future were beginning to spiral out of control.

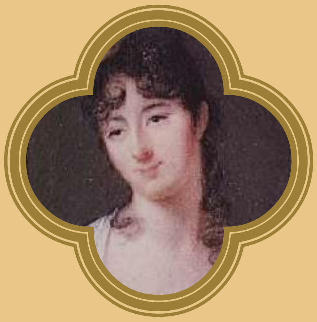
Eugène was keen to follow his father into the army, which Bonaparte could help with. Hortense was destined to make a good marriage, which would necessitate an education and a handsome dowry. If her children had disliked Napoleon then



Taken from the LIFE Picture Collection, this portrait depicts Napoleon dancing with a woman most assume to be Joséphine

NAPOLEON’S LIAISONS

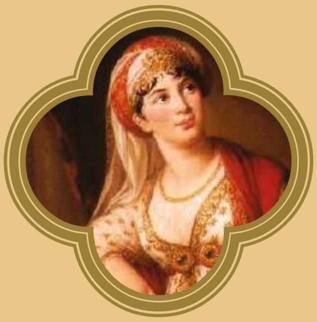
Although Napoleon would remain devoted to Joséphine until his death, even after their divorce in 1810 and his subsequent remarriage to Archduchess Maria Louisa, he still had several other liaisons with other women. He maintained that his position gave him the right to do as he pleased, regardless of his wife’s feelings about the matter. Naturally, many of his sexual encounters are now lost to history, but we still know the names of some of his most prominent mistresses. These included noblewomen, opera singers, camp followers, actresses and, it was even rumoured, his own sister Pauline, Princess Borghese.



Pauline Fourès

b.1778-d.1869

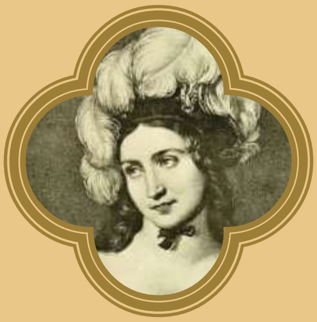
Wife of a junior officer on Napoleon’s doomed Egyptian campaign, she had followed the troops dressed in a male uniform to escape detection, due to her husband’s being called upon interrupting their honeymoon. In 1798, she caught Napoleon’s eye just after he had been informed of Joséphine’s latest affair and in revenge he took her as his mistress, installing her in sumptuous quarters in Cairo and encouraging his men to call her his ‘Cleopatra’.



Giuseppina Grassini

b.1773-d.1850

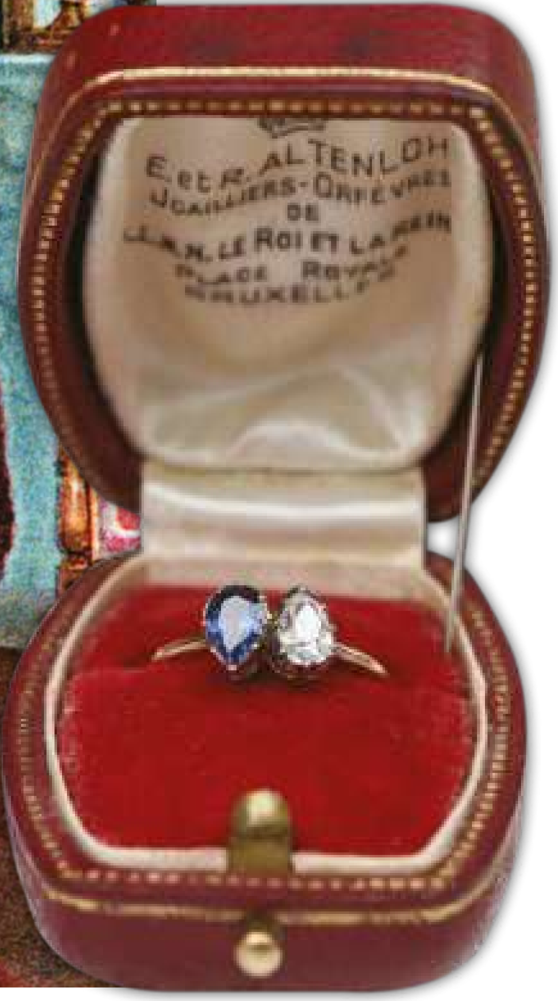
Grassini was one of the most famous and popular opera singers in Europe when Napoleon successfully seduced her during a visit to Milan in 1800. Their affair was brief and passionate before she threw him over for another man, a violinist she performed alongside, Pierre Rode. In later years she would enjoy a fling with Napoleon’s archenemy, Lord Wellington. She is now remembered as one of the greatest singers of her time.



Catherine-Joséphine Duchesnois

b.1777-d.1835

Duchesnois was one of the most successful actresses of the day and a regular at the prestigious Comédie-Français. Following her debut performance in 1802, she caught Napoleon’s eye when he came to a performance a few days later, having heard of her outstanding turn in Racine’s Phèdre. Their affair proved short lived when she lost out to her rival actress Mademoiselle Georges.



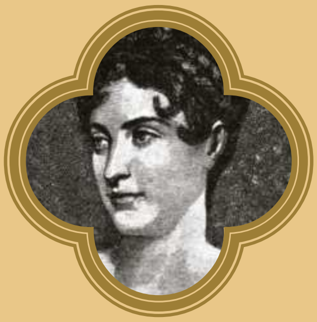
The sapphire and diamond engagement ring given to Joséphine

that might well have swayed Joséphine but they both liked him and appreciated the interest that he took in their welfare.

The couple became engaged in January 1796, with the thrilled and buoyantly excited Bonaparte presenting his love with a beautiful diamond and sapphire engagement ring. Their friends were delighted, but the newly engaged Joséphine was rather less than ecstatic and made it clear to Thérésa and Barras that she viewed the forthcoming marriage as a business arrangement. It's even possible that she was still quietly sleeping with the latter until the wedding day itself, seeing no reason to change her lifestyle quite yet for a man that she wasn't in love with. This lack of sentimental attachment to her betrothed is perhaps reflected by the simple plans made for their wedding in March of the same year, which would be an entirely civil affair.

On the evening of the 9 March, Joséphine went to the city hall on the Rue d'Antin accompanied by her ex-lover Barras, the Tallien couple and her notary Calmelet. She was dressed with typical elegance and simplicity in a plain white gown, pulled in at the waist with a tricolour sash and with her wedding present from Napoleon, a gold medallion inscribed with the words 'To Destiny'. Neither of their families were present at the ceremony, and for three hours nor was the groom. He was so preoccupied with the preparations for his departure to Italy that he completely lost track of the time. As Joséphine was about to discover, this self-absorption and disregard for the time were all hallmarks of her new husband's character.

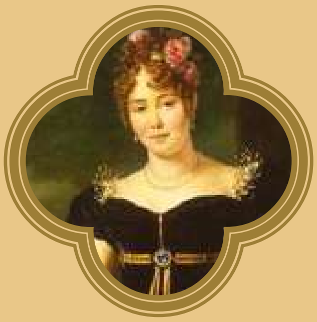
Less than 15 minutes later they were married by the Mayor's deputy, the Mayor himself having



MARGUERITE GEORGES

b.1787-d.1867

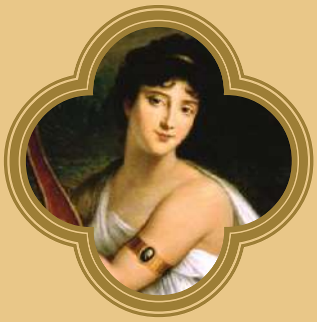
Mademoiselle Georges was even more famous than her rival Mademoiselle Duchesnois when she became mistress of Napoleon and even now is considered to be one of the greatest French stage actresses of all time. Their torrid affair lasted between 1802 and 1804 before they went their separate ways. She later went on to have liaisons with Wellington and Tsar Alexander I of Russia, with whom she had a daughter, Maria, in 1814.



MARIE WALEWSKA

b.1786-d.1817

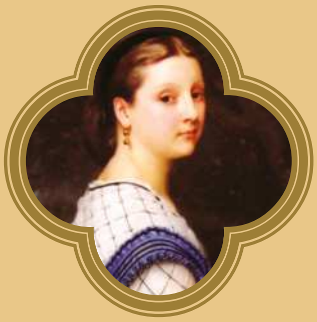
A beautiful Polish aristocrat married to an older husband who turned a blind eye when Napoleon stayed paying court to his wife after his conquest of Poland in 1806. He believed that it was her patriotic duty to accept their conqueror's advances to soften his attitude towards her people. Though she was initially unwilling to comply, Marie eventually fell for Napoleon and bore him a son, Alexandre, in 1810 after following him to Paris.



ELÉONORE DENUELLE

b.1787-d.1868

Eléonore was brought to Napoleon's attention by his sister, Caroline, who was determined to undermine his marriage to Joséphine. Caroline hoped that a younger mistress might conceive a child, proving to her brother he was capable of producing an heir. She was delighted when Eléonore became pregnant and gave birth to his son, Léon, which set in motion his determination to divorce Joséphine and father a legitimate heir to his empire.



ALBINE DE MONTHOLON

b.1779-d.1848

Albine was the wife of the marquis de Montholon, a French general fanatically loyal to Napoleon, who opted to follow his beloved Emperor into exile to Saint Helena after the Battle of Waterloo. Albine accompanied them and at some point during their stay there became Bonaparte's last known mistress. Her daughter Napoleone Hélène, who was born in June 1816 may well have been Napoleon's child, although he was never to acknowledge her as such.

long since departed home to bed, and were on their way back to Joséphine's house on the Rue de Chantereine where her beloved pet pug, Fortuné, objected to this new male interloper in her bedchamber. The couple enjoyed a brief honeymoon before Napoleon departed for Italy. Thanks to Barras pulling some strings, he had been promoted to Commander of the Army of Italy just a few days before their wedding. Although this was almost certainly down to his own merit, it was still whispered that the command had effectively been Barras' attempt to bribe Napoleon to take Joséphine off his hands – a claim not flattering to either.

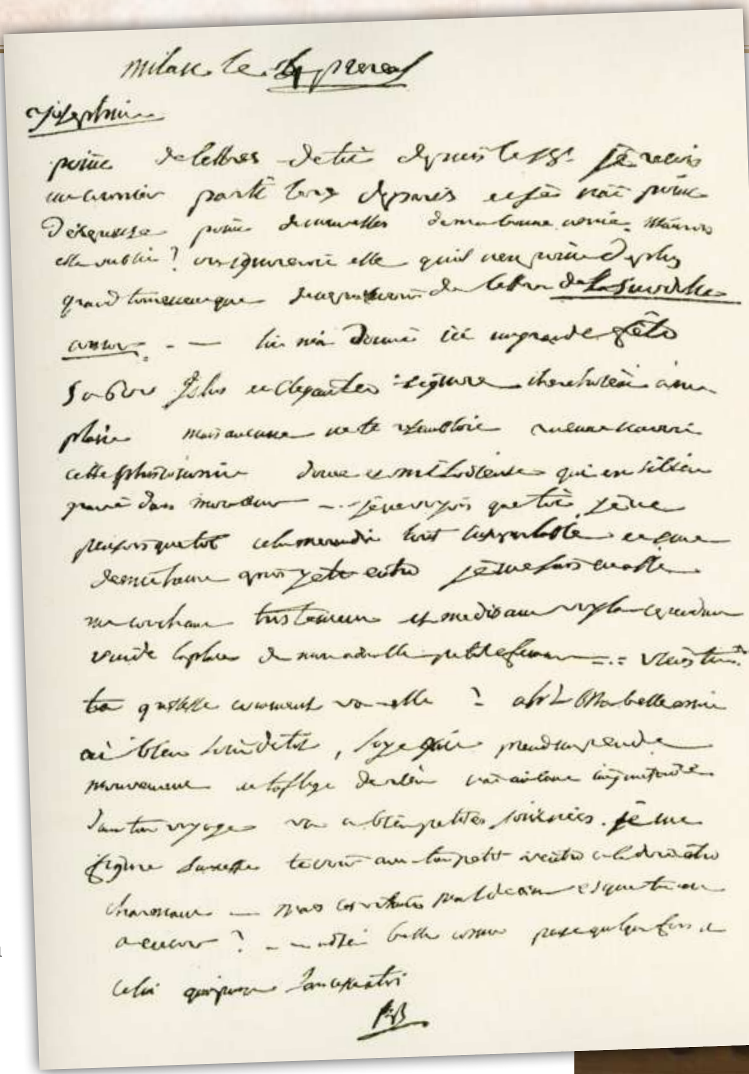
Joséphine was never far from Napoleon's thoughts. He sent a constant stream of passionate letters back to her in Paris, telling her in no uncertain terms what he would like to do to her, begging for reassurance that she loved him back and dropping increasingly heavy hints that he would like her to join him. Napoleon's obvious passionate love for Joséphine, which bordered on obsession, still rings true centuries later.

However, his frequent pleas for his wife to reply and with more than a few perfunctory lines fell on deaf ears. Joséphine had never been a particularly great letter writer and although she happily read his love letters out loud to her friends, she found his passion for her more disconcerting than flattering. Besides which, she had fallen in love with someone else – a handsome young Hussar officer called Hippolyte Charles – and it was he, not her husband, who was the recipient of her own erotic billets doux.

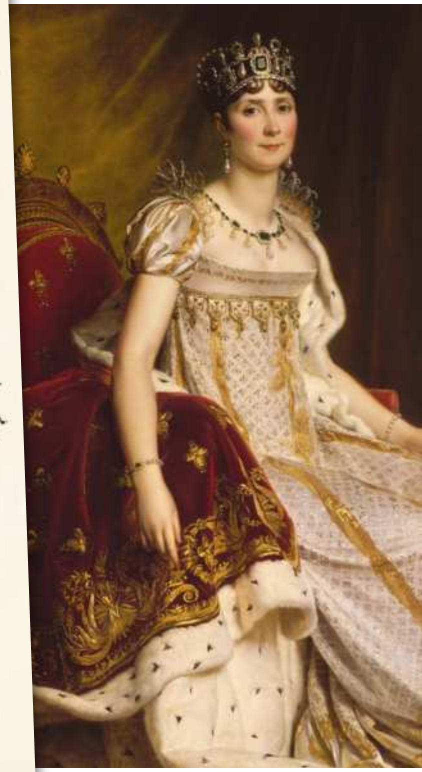
Utterly in love with Charles and enjoying the social benefits of being the wife of the conqueror of Italy, Joséphine ignored her husband's increasingly desperate requests that she should join him. It was only when he threatened to either kill himself or return to Paris that the higher powers prevailed upon her to leave for the sake of the nation and in June she found herself in a carriage bound for Italy – with Charles with her.

According to an eyewitness, "She wept as though she were going to a torture chamber, instead of to Italy to reign as a sovereign." They made the journey in slow stages, giving them plenty of time to secretly canoodle away from the suspicious eyes of Napoleon's brother, Joseph, who had accompanied them, and eventually reached Milan 18 days after their departure from Paris. Charles immediately left for his headquarters in Brescia and Joséphine was alone at last with her husband.

The affair with Charles continued throughout her sojourn in Italy, with the lovers taking every possible opportunity to be together while Napoleon was away with his army. Although she had been deeply unwilling to go there, her time in Italy turned out to be a time of great personal happiness for Joséphine as she enjoyed the adulation and flattery of the Italian people during the day and romantic trysts with her lover in beautiful palaces at night. The aristocratic self-assurance and beautiful manners that had drawn Napoleon to her would now come into their own as she entertained local dignitaries and attended fêtes and balls held in her honour, showing him just what an asset she actually was, as he himself was generally more inclined to cause offence than charm people at such occasions.



A letter Napoleon wrote to Joséphine on 23 May 1796, while he was on campaign in Italy

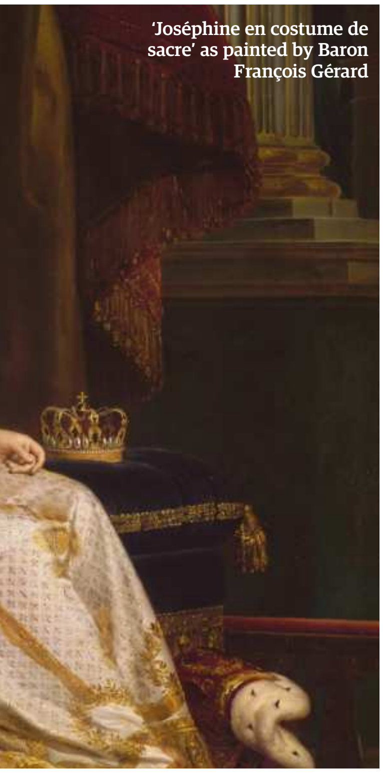


The only fly in the ointment was the arrival of most of Bonaparte's family, who were openly disapproving of his marriage and made no attempt to hide their dislike of Joséphine. With her usual calm good nature, she did her best to ignore their hostility and treated them all with nothing less than perfect courtesy.

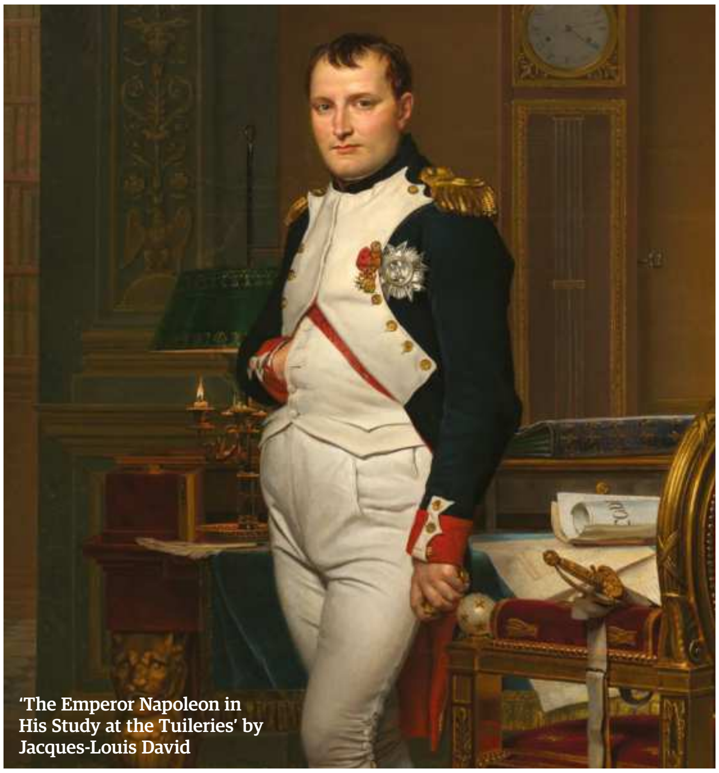
The situation finally came to a head in November 1796 when Napoleon, desperate to see his distant wife, arrived without warning in Milan, only to find her rooms empty. She had gone to Genoa, probably with Charles, without telling him and would not return for over a week, during which time Napoleon sent her several furious letters, informing her that he had "Left everything to see you, to hold you in my arms… the pain that I feel is incalculable."

Although he had no proof that she was with a lover, it's clear from his increasingly despairing, unanswered letters that the scales were beginning to fall from his eyes where Joséphine was concerned. From that moment on, he would never again quite trust or worship her as the epitome of perfect womanhood as he had once done.

The marriage of Napoleon and Joséphine lasted for almost 14 years before he felt compelled to divorce her, in January 1810, so that he could make



‘Joséphine en costume de sacre’ as painted by Baron François Gérard

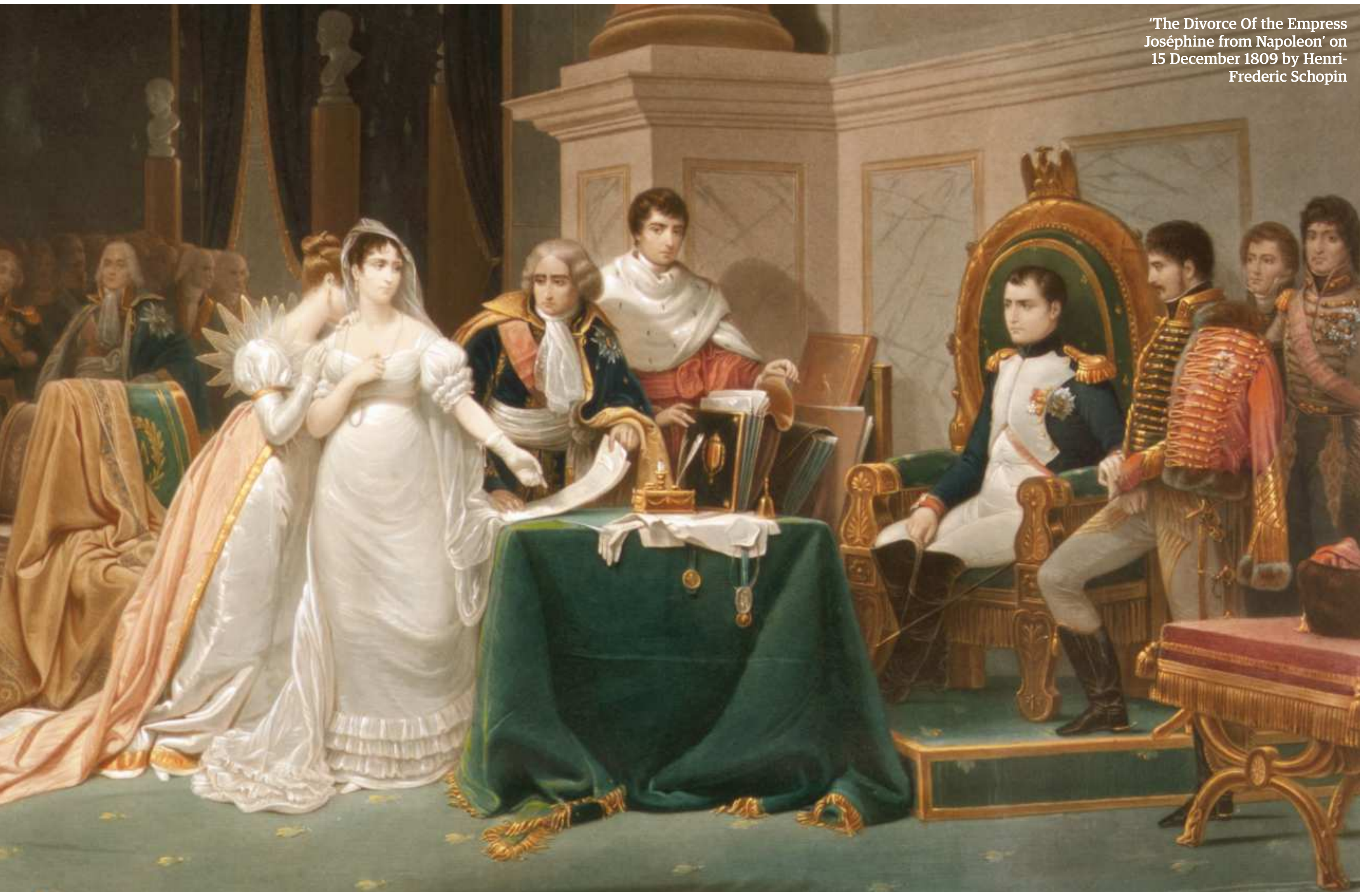


‘The Emperor Napoleon in His Study at the Tuileries’ by Jacques-Louis David

“THEY MADE THE JOURNEY IN SLOW STAGES, GIVING THEM PLENTY OF TIME TO SECRETLY CANOODLE”

a dynastic marriage with a suitably blue-blooded princess who would be able to provide him with the male heir he craved. Although her affair with Charles marked a turning point in their relationship and greatly tarnished Napoleon’s admiration for his wife, he never ceased to love her, even after their marriage had come to an end. According to some sources, Napoleon’s last word from his deathbed on St Helena was “Joséphine…”

As for Joséphine, this would also mark a turning point of a rather different nature as she began to appreciate that perhaps her peculiar little husband wasn’t quite so ridiculous after all and even started to fall in love with him. She was much too late.



‘The Divorce Of the Empress Joséphine from Napoleon’ on 15 December 1809 by Henri-Frederic Schopin

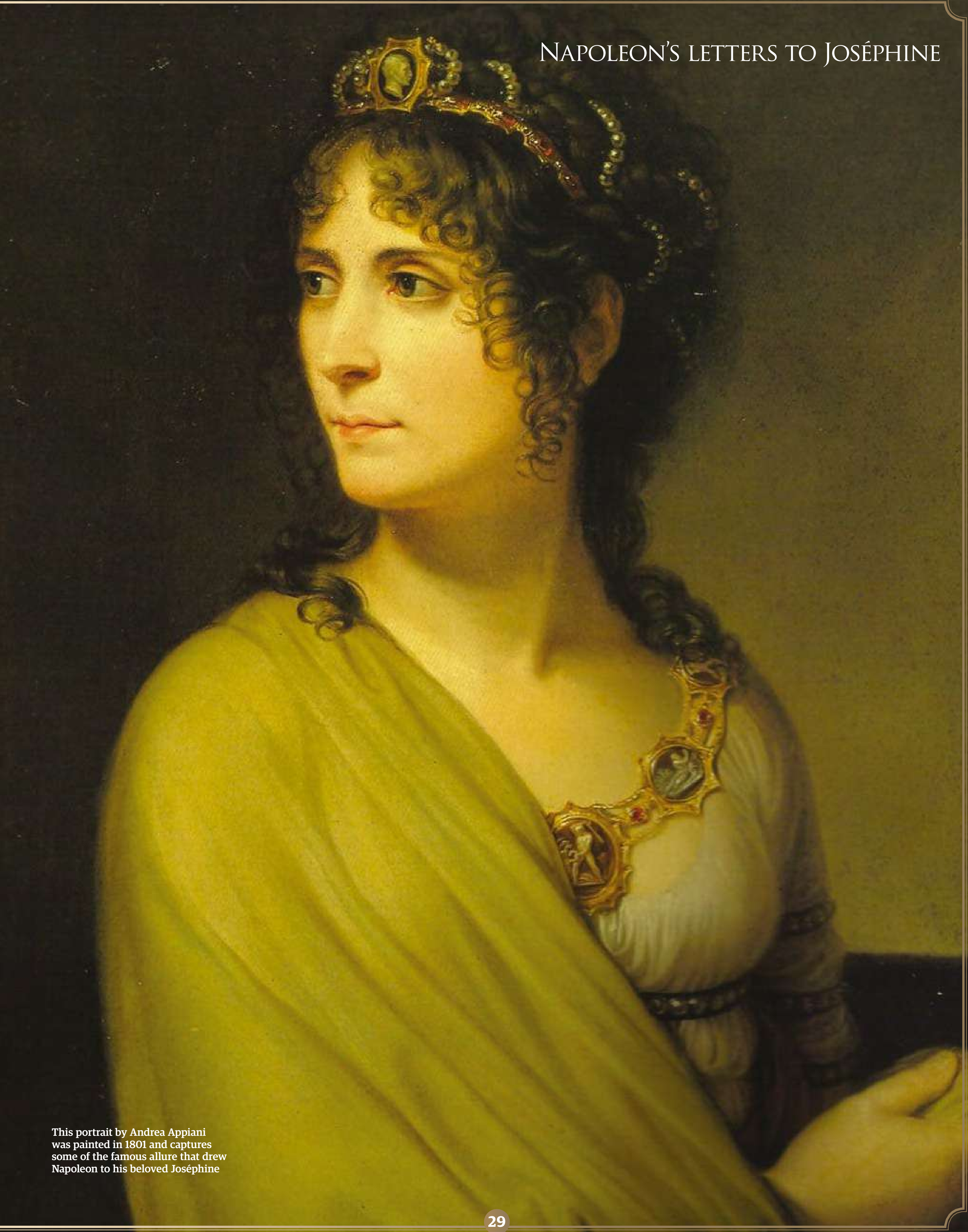
NAPOLEON'S LETTERS TO JOSÉPHINE

Napoleon poured all of his passion for Joséphine into his letters, often writing twice a day while they were apart, only to become frustrated and enraged when she failed to reply

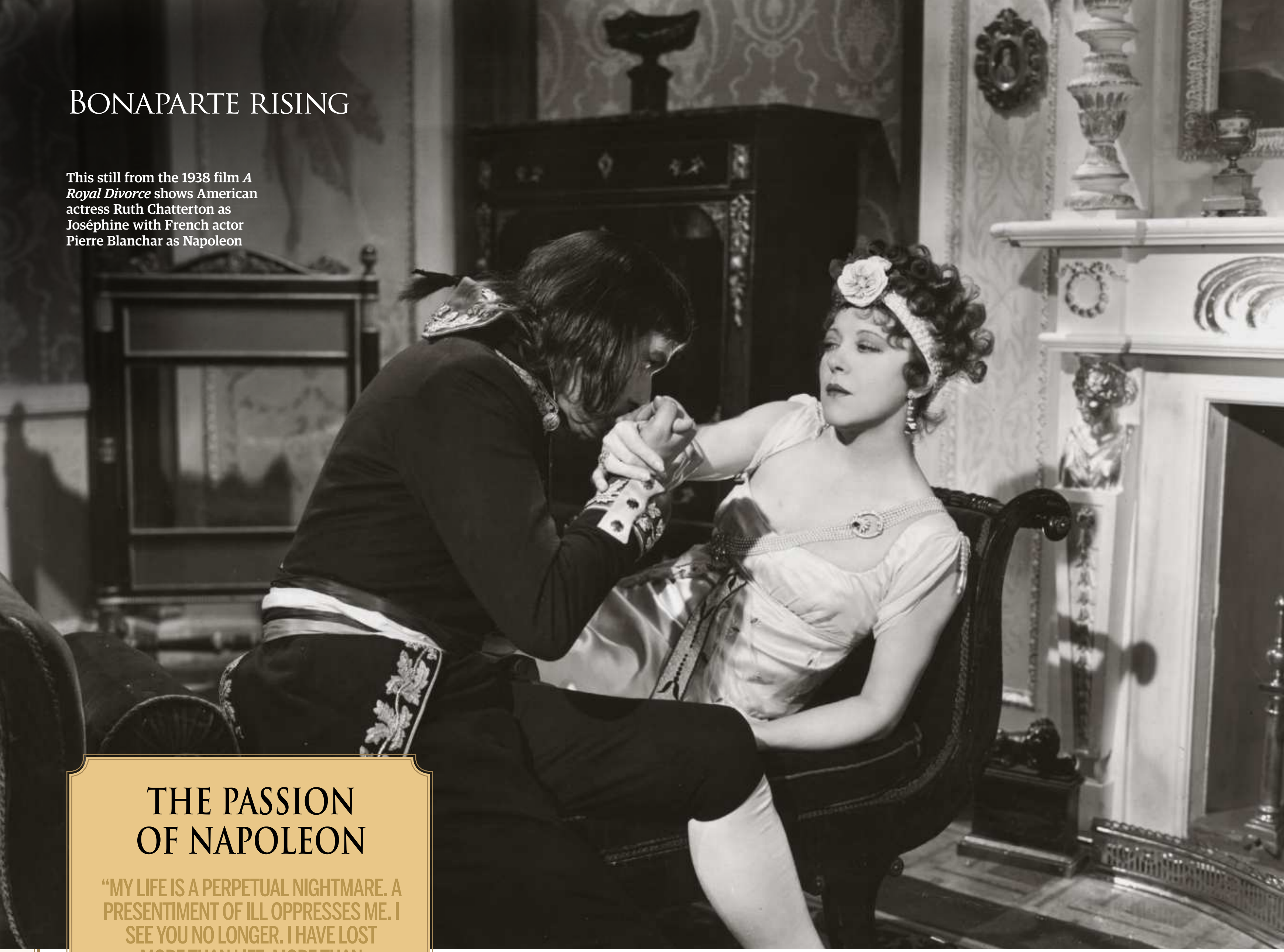
Words **Melanie Clegg**

It was love at first sight when the ambitious young officer Napoleon Bonaparte first set eyes on sophisticated aristocratic widow Rose de Beauharnais, whose first husband had been guillotined during the Reign of Terror. However, while Napoleon was immediately infatuated with Rose, who was six years older than him and in her early 30s, she was rather less impressed by her young suitor who wasn't as well dressed or polished as the men that she usually became involved with. However, despite his deficiencies, she found Napoleon amusing and even cheerfully accepted the fact that he insisted upon calling her Joséphine, a play on her middle name of Josephe. The couple were married in March 1796, just two days before Napoleon left for Italy as the head of an army, leaving his new bride behind in Paris. They had known each other for less than six months and had spent very little time together before they were married and now they were facing their first ever separation – a fact that drove Napoleon to despair but which Joséphine, who was not in love with her new husband, bore with equanimity. Before he departed, Napoleon, who was a prolific and enthusiastic correspondent, made Joséphine promise to write several times a week – either not realising or not caring that she hated writing anything longer than short notes.

To Joséphine's dismay, Napoleon sent her a constant stream of letters after his departure, writing at least once a day, often twice, and sending the missives along with his official despatches back to his superiors in Paris. His letters were frequently long and meandering and clearly written while he was alone in his quarters at night, when he naturally missed Joséphine most. Occasionally though, he would scrawl a few brief lines after a particularly satisfying military engagement, just to let her know that he had done well – doubtless in the hopes that she would be impressed by his prowess. The letters are full of passionate and even rather hysterical declarations of his love, assuring her that "you are the one thought of my life", that he was "dying to be by your side", that "to live for Joséphine, that is the history of my life" and that "the love with which you have inspired me has bereft me of reason". In another letter, he informed her that "I am nothing without you. I scarcely imagine how I existed without knowing you" before going on to remind her that "if you love me, if you realise how everything depends on your health, take care of yourself." Every letter is signed off with "millions" of kisses or even "a thousand kisses as burning as you are cold". Napoleon's passion for his wife, which bordered on obsession, is evident in every letter as he veers between declaring his intense love with lines like "the day on which I no longer possess your heart will be that on which parched nature will be for me without warmth and without vegetation" and berating her as a "naughty undutiful, cruel, tyrannous, jolly little monster" for her lack of response. For while Napoleon was pouring his heart out in his letters, Joséphine could barely be bothered to send even the briefest reply and was torn between amusement and embarrassment at the torrents of passionate angst that were coming her way. "How can you forget a man who loves you with so much fervour?" he demanded at one point. "No letters from you for three days; and yet I have written to you several times." As time went by, Napoleon became increasingly troubled and frustrated by the lengthy gaps between his wife's letters and veered between cajolement and threats in his attempts to get her to write more – only to often be disappointed by



This portrait by Andrea Appiani was painted in 1801 and captures some of the famous allure that drew Napoleon to his beloved Joséphine



This still from the 1938 film *A Royal Divorce* shows American actress Ruth Chatterton as Joséphine with French actor Pierre Blanchar as Napoleon

THE PASSION OF NAPOLEON

"MY LIFE IS A PERPETUAL NIGHTMARE. A PRESENTIMENT OF ILL OPPRESSES ME. I SEE YOU NO LONGER. I HAVE LOST MORE THAN LIFE, MORE THAN HAPPINESS, MORE THAN REST. I AM ALMOST WITHOUT HOPE."

"WITHOUT HIS JOSÉPHINE, WITHOUT THE ASSURANCE OF HER LOVE, WHAT IS LEFT HIM UPON EARTH? WHAT CAN HE DO?"

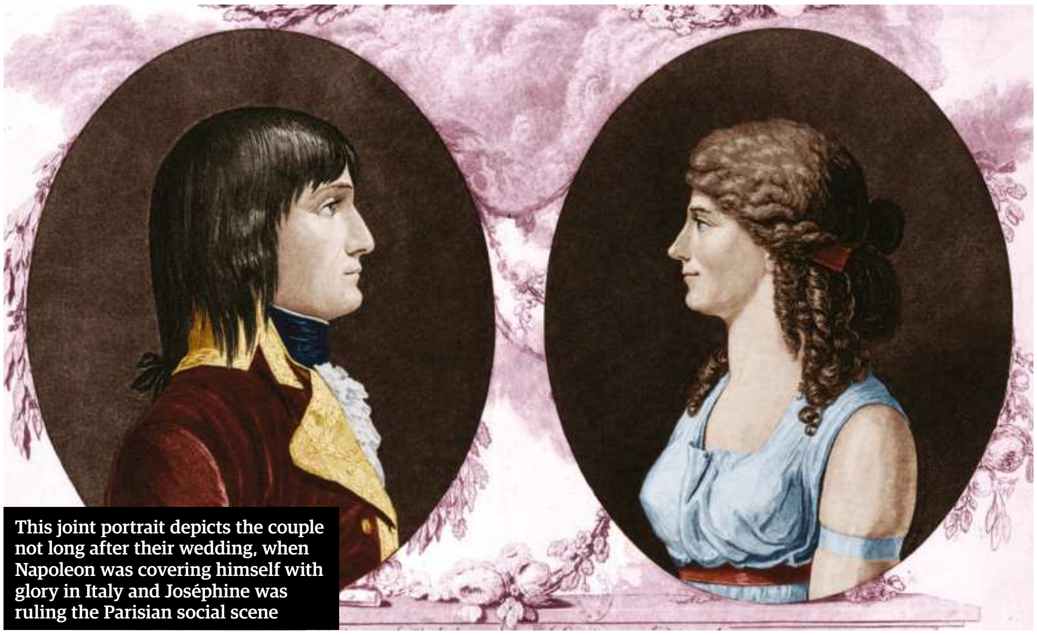
"CEASELESSLY I RECALL YOUR KISSES, YOUR TEARS, YOUR ENCHANTING JEALOUSY; AND THE CHARMS OF THE INCOMPARABLE JOSÉPHINE KEEP CONSTANTLY ALIGHT A BRIGHT AND BURNING FLAME IN MY HEART AND SENSES."

"DO YOU REMEMBER MY DREAM, IN WHICH I WAS YOUR BOOTS, YOUR DRESS AND IN WHICH I MADE YOU COME BODILY INTO MY HEART?"

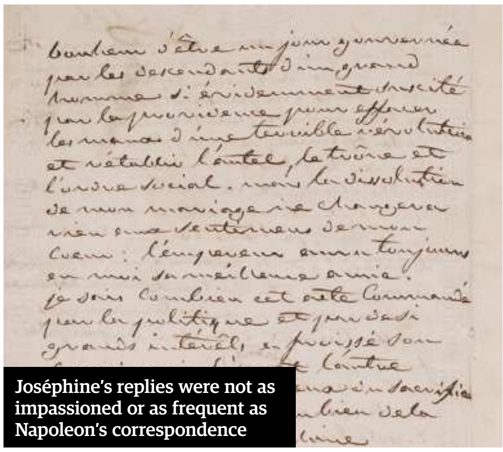
"EVERY DAY I COUNT UP YOUR MISDEEDS. I LASH MYSELF TO FURY IN ORDER TO LOVE YOU NO MORE."

the lacklustre results. "Your letters are as cold as if you were fifty; we might have been married fifteen years," he admonished her after one particularly frosty missive had found its way to him in Italy. "One finds in them the friendship and feelings of that winter of life."

Although the chief theme of the surviving letters is Napoleon's tremendous and overwhelming passion for his wife and his despair that she did not seem to entirely reciprocate his ardour, he also found time to write to her about his military activities, sharing with her his many successes such as in a letter sent from Verona in January 1797, when he updated her about a battle fought that very same day in which "we have made six hundred prisoners, and have taken three piece of cannon." It is touching that no matter how tired and stressed he might have been, Napoleon's first thought was always to sit down and write to Joséphine, believing her to be his good luck charm and the muse of his military prowess. He had countless claims on his attention during his campaigns and yet still found the time both to lengthily assure Joséphine of his devotion and take an interest in her comparatively frivolous social activities in Paris, in addition to the wellbeing of her children Eugene and Hortense, both of whom, he assures her more than once, he loves almost as much as their mother. It really does seem as though there was literally no aspect of Joséphine's life that Napoleon was not interested in, which makes her lack of interest in his activities all the more obvious and rather pitiful. Sadly, there was no sympathy from the British sailors who intercepted a letter from Napoleon to his brother in which he complained at length about Joséphine's behaviour, informing him that "it is sad when one and the same heart is torn by such conflicting feelings for one person" and concluding that "I no longer care about my glory. At twenty nine I have exhausted everything." This letter was gleefully published in the London newspapers so that everyone could poke fun at the apparently indomitable General Bonaparte's hopeless and, in their eyes, emasculating passion for his feckless, uninterested wife. Napoleon was mortified and this, along with his belief that Joséphine had been unfaithful to him during his Egyptian campaign, changed their relationship and the tone of his letters forever. From now on, his expressions of ardour are tamer and although he would always continue to chide her for her tardiness in replying to him, his tone is now more amused by her laziness than hysterically needy and desperate for attention.

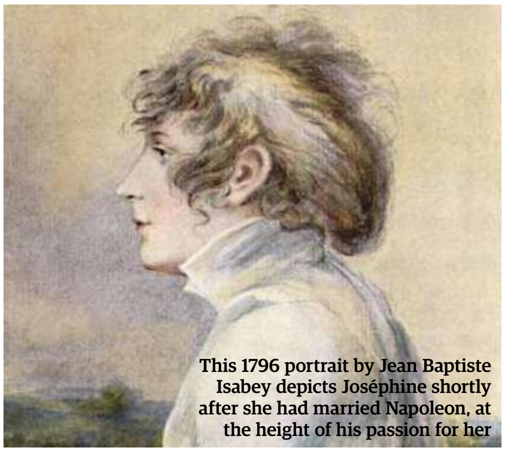


This joint portrait depicts the couple not long after their wedding, when Napoleon was covering himself with glory in Italy and Joséphine was ruling the Parisian social scene



bonheur d'être un jour gouvernée
par les descendants d'un grand
homme si évidemment suscité
par la providence pour effacer
les maux d'une terrible révolution
et rétablir l'autel, le trône et
l'ordre social. mais la dissolution
de mon mariage ne changera
rien aux sentiments de mon
cœur : l'empereur aura toujours
en moi sa meilleure amie.
je sais combien cet acte commandé
par la politique et par de si
grands intérêts, a froissé son
la contre
un sacrifice
bien de la
ligne

Joséphine's replies were not as impassioned or as frequent as Napoleon's correspondence



This 1796 portrait by Jean Baptiste Isabey depicts Joséphine shortly after she had married Napoleon, at the height of his passion for her

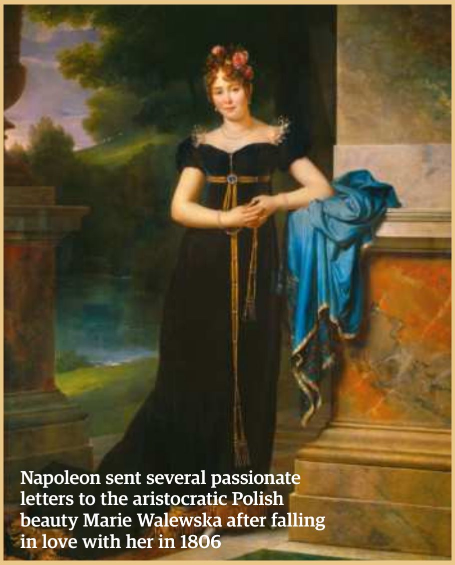
"NAPOLEON'S FIRST THOUGHT WAS ALWAYS TO SIT DOWN AND WRITE TO JOSÉPHINE"

Napoleon continued to write regular letters and notes to Joséphine after their divorce in January 1810, rather to the chagrin of his new wife Marie Louise, who was extremely jealous of his continued affection for Joséphine and hated the fact that they were still in constant contact. Naturally, the passion of the earlier letters in which Napoleon declared that "one of these nights the door will burst open with a bang, as if by a jealous husband, and in a moment I shall be in your arms" and "your image gilds my fancies, and enlivens the black and sombre picture of melancholy and grief" is gone now that the couple are no longer married but there is still evidently plenty of love and affection in Napoleon's post-divorce letters. He is full of solicitous concern about her health and wellbeing, begging her to "take special care of your health, which is so precious to me" and telling her to "never doubt the whole truth of my affection for you; it will last as long as I." It is obvious from the letters that Napoleon missed Joséphine terribly and he had no problem telling her that he too was "sad" and "miserable" about their separation, while the letters are full of plans to visit her and then regret when his official duties meant that they were unable to spend time together. Less pleasingly for Joséphine, he was still very fond of lecturing her about her extravagance, often admonishing her to "put some order into your affairs" and telling her off about her debts, just as he had done when they were still married.

After his marriage to Marie Louise, Napoleon's letters became rather less affectionate and his protestations of his continued "affection" and "love" were frequently demoted to simply "friendship". It's clear, though, that his love and concern for Joséphine never abated, even after the birth of his son – in fact the letters are rather tactlessly littered with proud updates about the health of the baby prince, for whom Joséphine had been sacrificed. Whether Napoleon was still in love with Joséphine is doubtful but they were married for 15 years and so it is hardly surprising that Napoleon continued to take a close interest in her wellbeing and affairs, especially as she remained unmarried after their divorce and so still relied on him for advice. It's also obvious that Joséphine now welcomed their correspondence, greeting his letters with pleasure and being quick to respond, which was a definite contrast to her behaviour at the beginning of their marriage. It is very tempting to speculate just how much his initial ardour was actively inflamed by her indifference, and whether we would have been treated to such extravagant and melodramatic outpourings of passion and woe if she had been an equally diligent correspondent.

NAPOLEON'S PASSION FOR MARIE WALEWSKA

Although Napoleon's letters to Joséphine are rightly celebrated as masterpieces of melodramatic, thwarted passion, she was not the only woman to inspire one of his romantic missives. After Napoleon met the beautiful Polish aristocrat Marie Walewska in 1806, he sent her a letter telling her that "I saw no one but you, I admired no one but you, I want no one but you" and when her response was less than encouraging, wrote begging her to "grant a few moments' pleasure and happiness to a poor heart that is only waiting to adore you" and even resorted to a promise that "your country will be dearer to me, once you have had pity on my poor heart". The problem was that Marie was married and also extremely devout, which made her hesitant to give in to her ardent new admirer's attentions. After she capitulated, he sent her a bouquet of flowers and ordered her to carry them at that night's reception, telling her that it would be "a secret link" between them and that "when my hand presses my heart, you will know that I am thinking of no one but you; and when you press your bouquet, I shall have your answer back!"



Napoleon sent several passionate letters to the aristocratic Polish beauty Marie Walewska after falling in love with her in 1806

NAPOLEON'S EARLY CAREER

Napoleon has become one of history's most famed – and infamous – rulers. But how was his life shaped by his early career?

Words **Catherine Curzon**

When a young Napoleon Bonaparte entered the École Militaire in Paris in 1784, his future career appeared to be mapped out before him. Napoleon intended to become an artillery officer and though the death of his father forced him to condense his two years of studies into one, this consummate high-flier became the first Corsican to graduate from that famed institution.

For a man who later showed such a single-minded dedication to his own advancement, the years immediately following Napoleon's graduation found him taking leave from his position as second lieutenant in the La Fère artillery regiment to return to Corsica, where he fought fervently for the Jacobin cause. Despite his absence he was promoted to captain in 1792 and when he returned to France, he found his Jacobin sympathies very much in vogue.

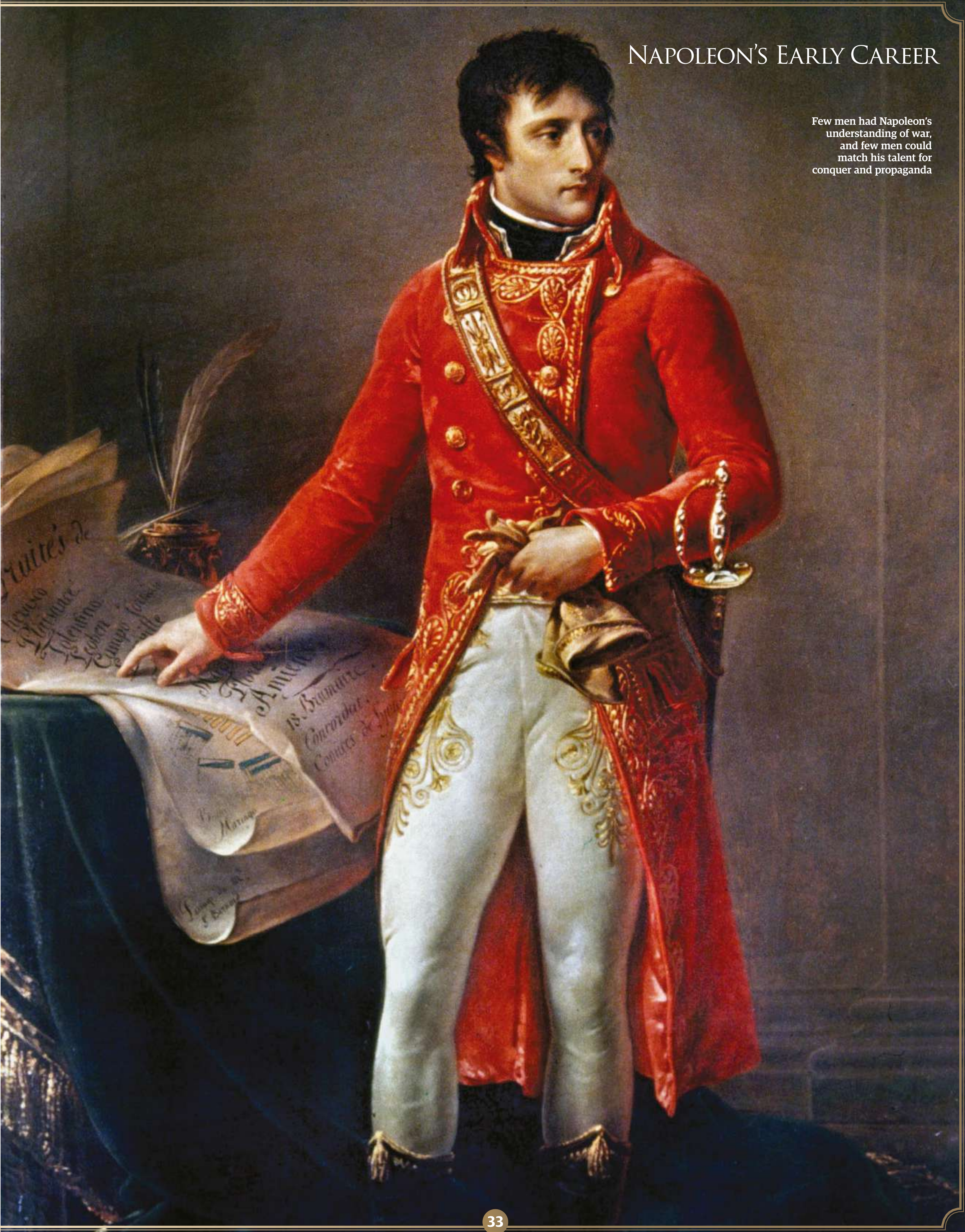
In 1793 Napoleon was put in command of the republican armies at the Siege of Toulon, where royalists were rebelling against the ruling revolutionary government. Napoleon was entrusted with breaking the siege and putting down the royalist rebels and the English forces to whom they had handed the port and who had dug their heels deeply into French soil. His attack strategy involved seizing a hill from which French artillery could rain down fire and fury on the British, forcing them to evacuate and abandon Toulon. Though Napoleon was injured during the assault, his audacious plan proved successful and his reward was a promotion, with the Committee of Public Safety giving him responsibility for the artillery arm of France's Army of Italy.

As he waited to take up his new position, Napoleon filled his time by making a detailed survey of fortifications along the Mediterranean coast. During his investigations he devised a plan for invading the Kingdom of Sardinia and in 1794, the French army put his strategy into action. Though the plan was a success, because he was a favourite of Augustin Robespierre – brother of Maximilien – and his fervent followers, when the tide of the Reign of Terror turned, Napoleon's days in the sun looked like they might be numbered.

In fact, Napoleon survived the fall of the Robespierre siblings and their regime by the sheer force of his talent. He was simply too valuable to remove and instead he remained in the service of France when the French Directory government was brought in to replace the ailing Committee of Public Safety. The only censure faced was a demotion to infantry command and it was an insult that he felt keenly. Upon learning that he was to be posted to the war-torn Vendée region, where civil war raged, he claimed illness in order to avoid the assignment. His reluctance resulted in his being removed from the list of generals and for a time, his situation was parlous indeed.

Napoleon's luck changed in 1795 when royalists rebelled in Paris. Thanks to the reputation he had gained in Toulon, when Director Paul Barras needed someone to defend the National Convention Napoleon was the obvious choice. With him Napoleon brought his future brother-in-law Joachim Murat, who was to become king of Naples years later. Together the two men masterminded a plan to turn the artillery on the rebels and on 5 October 1795, known as *13 Vendémiaire An IV* in the Republican Calendar, Napoleon's strategy was put into action. Murat seized cannons from the Camp des Sablons and managed to bring them in Paris without encountering resistance. Once they were in place, the cannons were turned on the rebels. Over 1,300 royalists were killed in the attack and those who were left took to their heels. It was an audacious tactic that few would have considered but it had worked. Napoleon had once again proved his mettle.

NAPOLEON'S EARLY CAREER

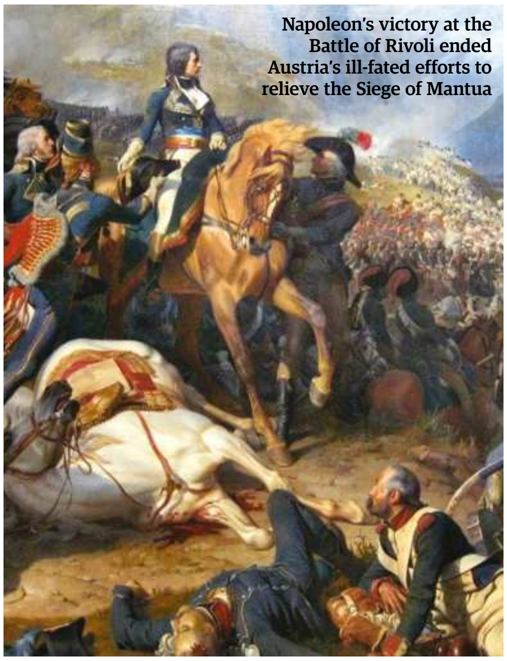

Traités de
Amiens
18 Brumaire
Concordat

Few men had Napoleon's understanding of war, and few men could match his talent for conquer and propaganda

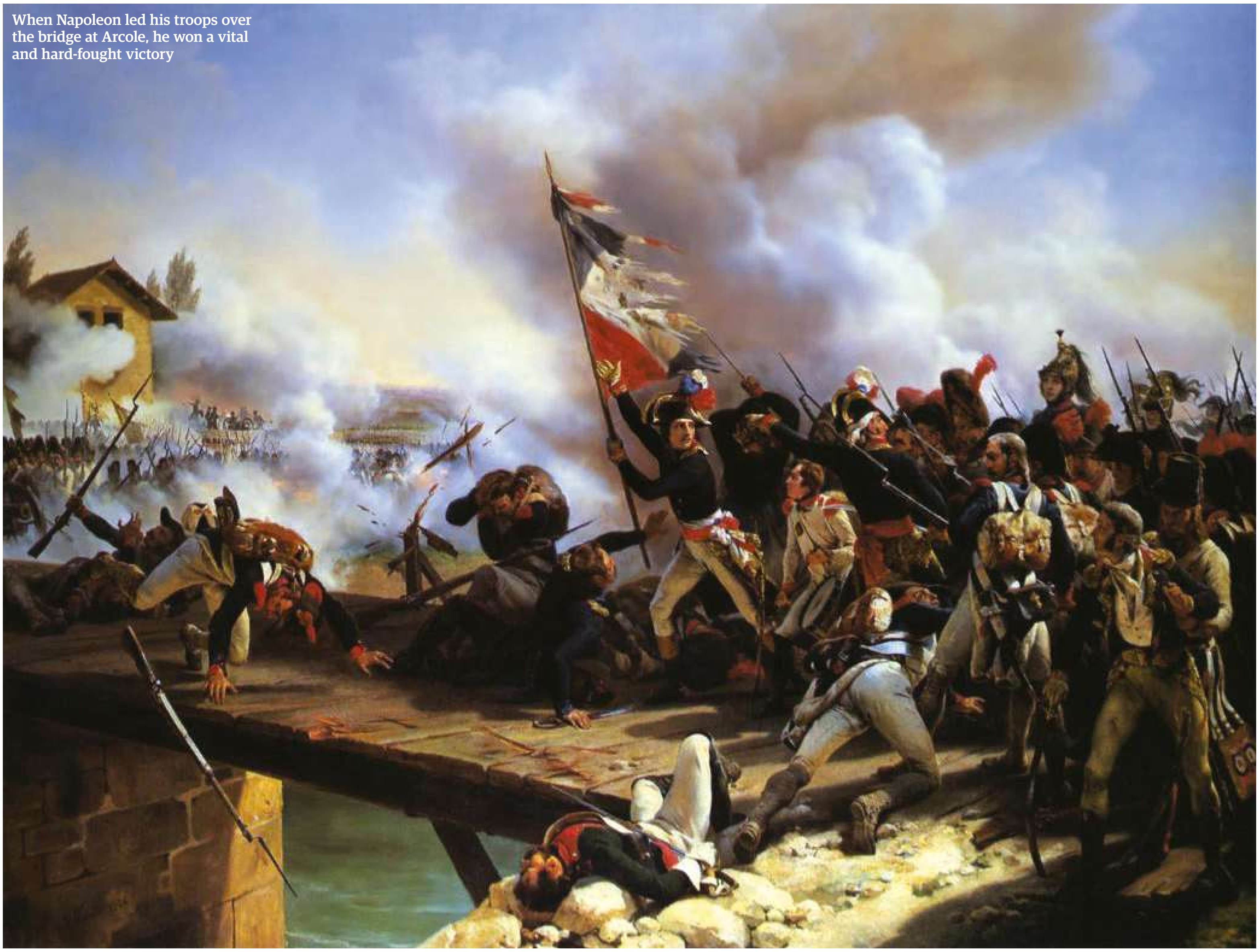
He had stood on the threshold of professional ruin, but Napoleon had turned the tables not only on the royalists, but on those who had doubted him. The Directory government lauded him and he was promoted above his previous rank, becoming commander of the Interior and the Army of Italy.

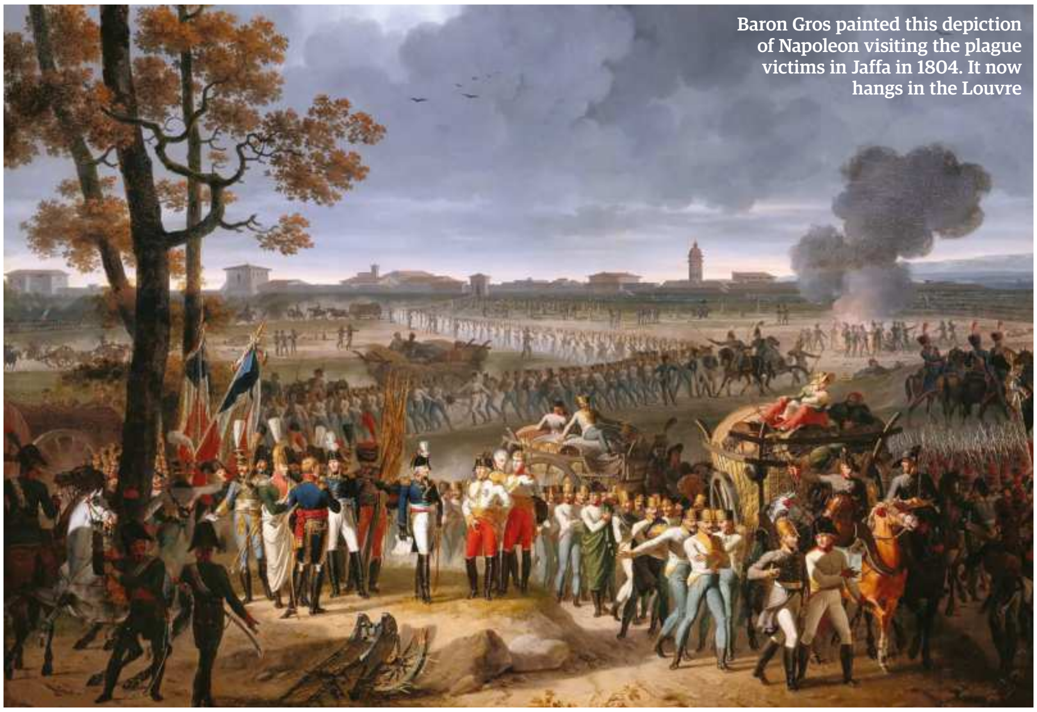
Napoleon left for Italy and immediately hit the Piedmontese forces with everything he had, hoping to catch them on the hop before their Austrian allies could come to their defence. It was a masterstroke and Piedmont held out for just a fortnight before they were knocked out of the conflict. Without this extra concern the French could concentrate firmly on Austria, the more considerable of the two opponents. The ongoing conflict eventually became focussed on the Siege of Mantua, where the French came under attack from Austrian troops who were desperate to break their defence. Yet at every turn, Napoleon outwitted his opponents, keeping them at bay with battle after battle. The decisive moment came in January 1797 when French forces routed the Austrians at Rivoli, costing them 14,000 casualties against France's 5,000. It was a last, disastrous stand for the Austrian military and as the smoke cleared at Rivoli, Austria's position in Italy was utterly decimated. If that weren't victory enough, Napoleon orchestrated the looting of Italy too, taking a fortune in cash and valuables.

With Italy succumbing to the French, Napoleon next turned his attention to quashing the seeming unbreakable Habsburg dominions, which were under the command of Archduke Charles. The first decisive victory came at Tarvis in March 1797

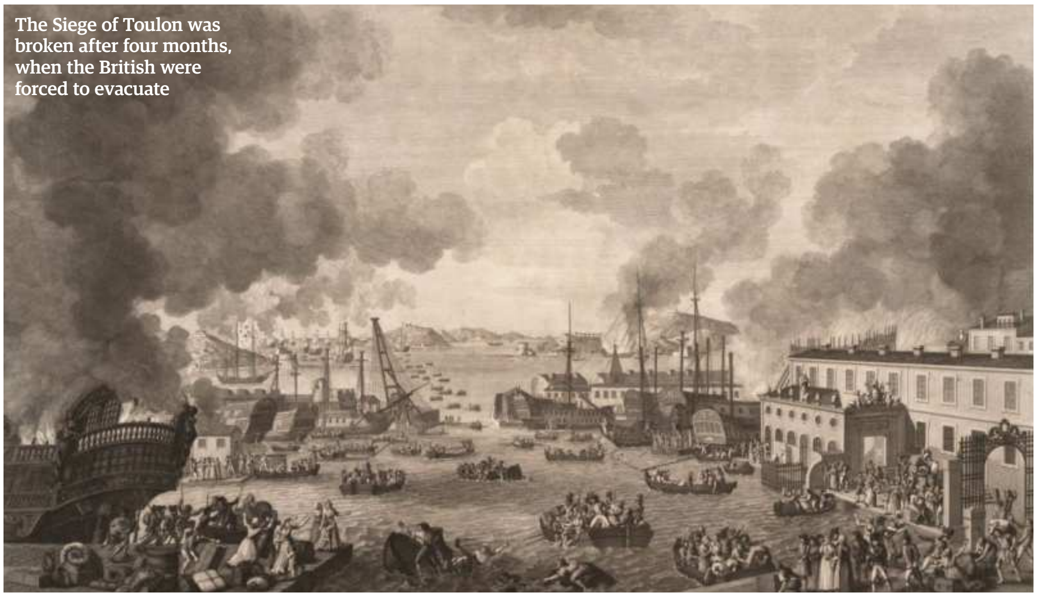

Napoleon's victory at the Battle of Rivoli ended Austria's ill-fated efforts to relieve the Siege of Mantua

"AT EVERY TURN, NAPOLEON OUTWITTED HIS OPPONENTS, KEEPING THEM AT BAY"


When Napoleon led his troops over the bridge at Arcole, he won a vital and hard-fought victory



Baron Gros painted this depiction of Napoleon visiting the plague victims in Jaffa in 1804. It now hangs in the Louvre



The Siege of Toulon was broken after four months, when the British were forced to evacuate

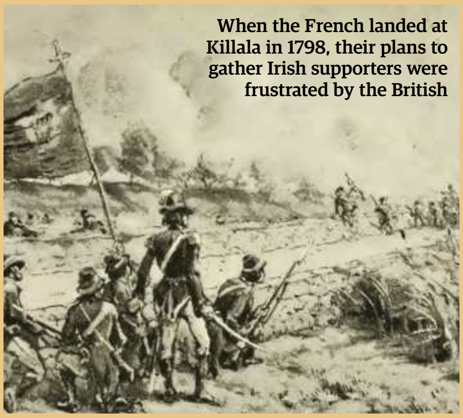
when Napoleon's advance succeeded in driving the Austrians back deep into their own embattled territory, making vital gains that Charles could ill afford to concede. This monumental effort brought the French within touching distance of Vienna and, with their capital threatened, the Archduke sought a diplomatic close to the conflict.

Austria, of course, was in a weak negotiating position and Napoleon knew that better than anyone. When terms were agreed under the Treaty of Leoben, the cost for Austria was high. The treaty was heavily in favour of the dominating French, handing them control of the majority of north Italy and the Low Countries, while allowing Austria to take control of the Republic of Venice. Yet Napoleon had no time for such special clauses, let alone an independent state that had existed for more than a thousand years. He turned his forces on the Republic of Venice and drove it to surrender, putting an end to its independence once and for all.

By 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte was neither a junior solider nor an upstart Corsican, but one of the most respected and feared soldiers on the European battlefield. His vital understanding of the intricate minutiae of war saw him able to adapt his strategy to whatever theatre he was fighting in, making use of the territory as well as capitalising on the weaknesses of his opponents. It was during this period that he arguably perfected his two favoured methods of assault, the first being to capitalise on the so-called hinge of enemy forces at the front, the second being to occupy the centre, driving a wedge between two forces. All of this was complemented by his instinctive understanding of the use of artillery and its vital place in the support of ground troops.

It was in these early years that Napoleon's career flourished beyond the military, and he used newspapers to spread his message across France. Royalists and opponents on his own side warned that he was out of control and on the verge of setting himself up as a dictator but Napoleon silenced them. He sent General Pierre Augereau to lead the Coup of 18 Fructidor, which placed Paul Barras in control of Paris. Yet Barras was answerable to Napoleon, who was ready to embark on his next push. The disenfranchised Corsican was the about to become one of the most powerful men the world had ever seen.

THE INVASION THAT WASN'T



When the French landed at Killala in 1798, their plans to gather Irish supporters were frustrated by the British

Perhaps the greatest of Napoleon's unfulfilled wishes was his desire to invade Britain, which he saw as France's most dangerous and challenging foe. Only by quelling the threat from Great Britain, he thought, could France be assured of victory in Europe. And only by quelling the British Royal Navy could Britain be cowed.

Yet this time, Napoleon was forced to accept that his ambitions outstripped his capabilities and after meeting with Foreign Minister Talleyrand, the plans for the invasion of Britain were looking shaky. They looked shakier still when 1,100 French soldiers landed at Killala Bay in Ireland on 22 August 1798, hoping to find support. Instead they found a country that was at its lowest ebb and a populace unwilling to commit to assisting in the planned invasion of Great Britain. A month later the French surrendered, having held Killala alongside the embattled rebels for just 32 days. They were no match for the British troops sent to deal with them.

It had been a weak effort from the start and as Admiral Nelson outwitted the French navy in Egypt, one that was ultimately doomed to fail. Napoleon's planned invasion of Great Britain, the jewel in his plans of conquer, never came to fruition.

NAPOLEON IN EGYPT

Fresh from a successful campaign in Italy, which had increased his prestige, Napoleon turned his attention to Egypt, drawn both by its wealth and reputation as the cradle of Western civilisation

Words **Melanie Clegg**

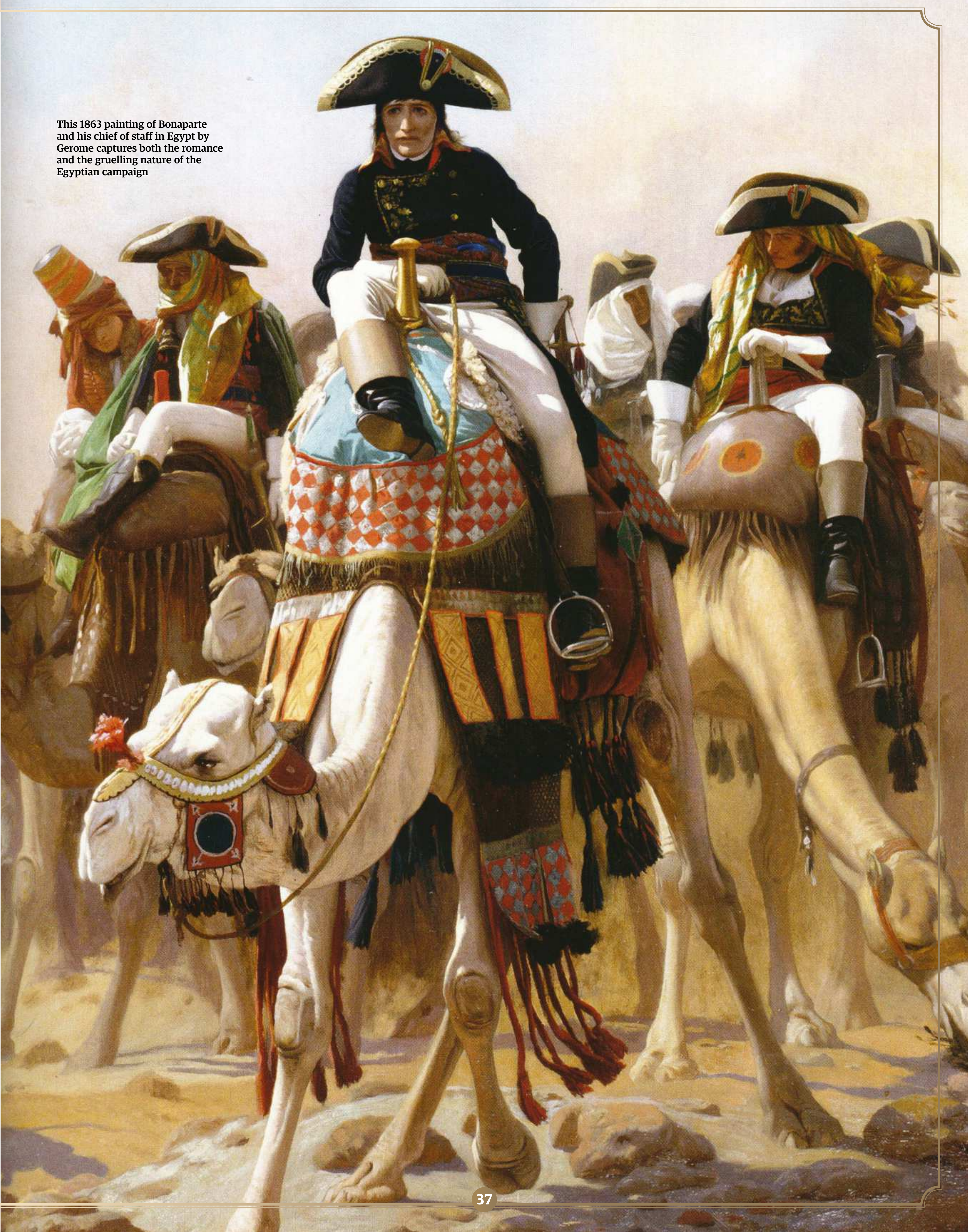
Egypt has exerted a powerful fascination over the rest of the known world for centuries, thanks to the lavish lifestyles of its rulers, its enigmatic and fascinating mythology, and the charismatic rulers such as Cleopatra VII. Its extraordinary wealth and fertile, resource-rich lands have also made it an attractive prospect for neighbouring civilisations seeking to colonise other lands in order to increase their own affluence. After the Romans deposed Cleopatra and successfully annexed Egypt in 30 BCE, it became one of the primary producers of grain for the Empire as well as a significant source of its wealth. By the 18th century, Egypt was ruled by the Ottoman Empire and was rather less prosperous than it had been during Roman times, but its resources were still rich enough to make it a worthwhile investment for other nations willing to put the time and effort into annexing it.

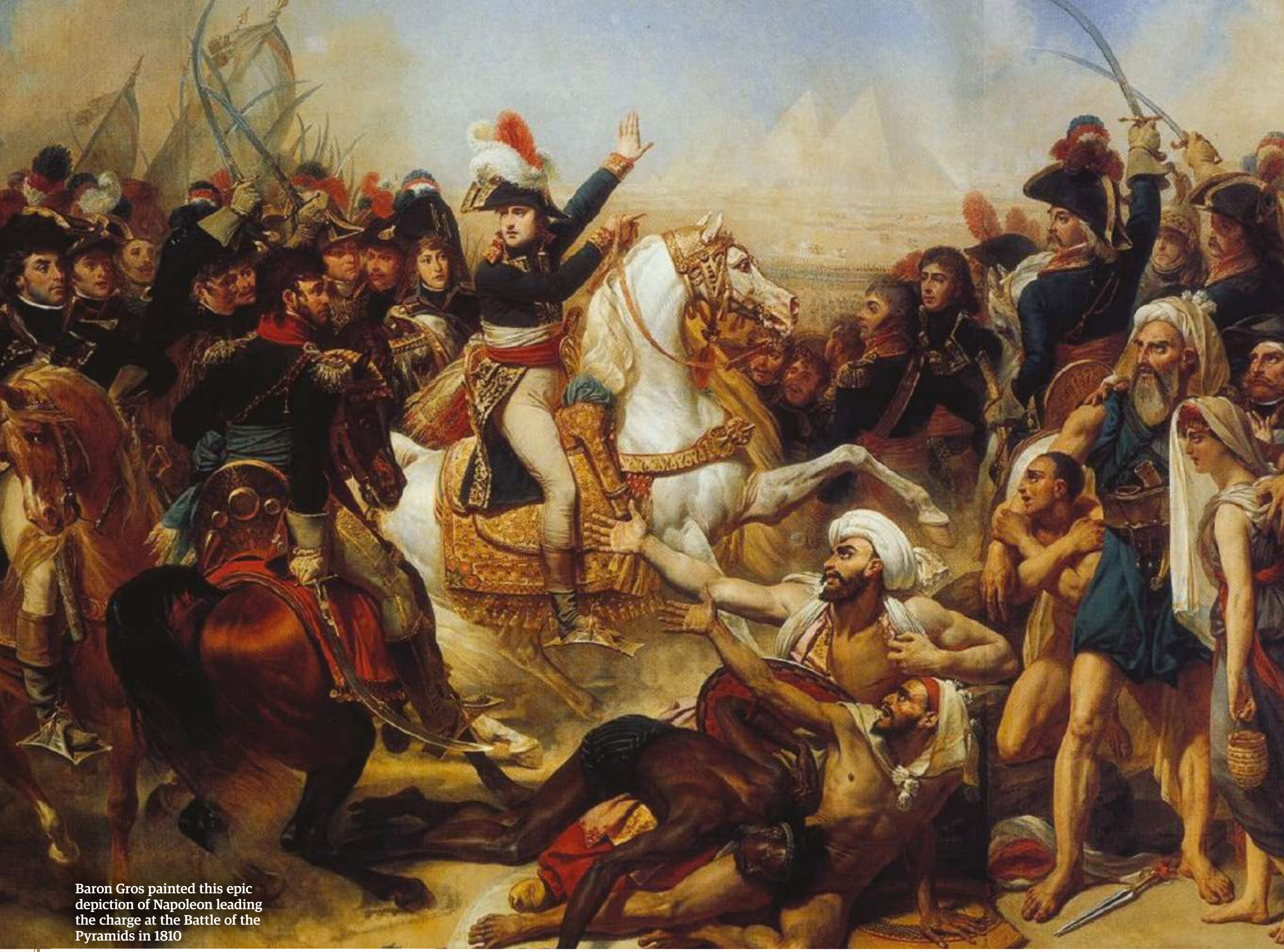
The idea of adding Egypt to France's growing portfolio of colonial interests, which included parts of Canada, Louisiana and India, was first mooted in the 17th century when the German philosopher Leibniz sought to distract Louis XIV from his plans of invading the German states. He suggested that he expend his energy on conquering Egypt instead, citing its rich resources and trade links to the East, which could be facilitated even more if the French built a canal connecting the Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea. He put together a detailed plan for a prospective invasion but was knocked back by Louis, who likened it to the Crusades and declared that "such expeditions have gone out of fashion". However, by the mid 18th century, France's colonial assets were rapidly dwindling thanks to conflicts with their great rivals, the British, who were also assiduously increasing their overseas empire. The fact that France was virtually bankrupt also made the prospect of increasing their colonial assets highly desirable, although it was by no means certain that they would be able to afford such an endeavour, especially after they invested a great deal of money into helping the Americans fight the British during the War of Independence. Nonetheless, in 1776, just two years after Louis XVI succeeded to the French throne, the Ministry of the Navy secretly despatched Baron de Tott, an aristocratic army officer and diplomat who had travelled extensively outside Europe, to Egypt in order to assess its natural assets and suitability for French annexation. However, although he reported back that Egypt was indeed ripe for development, no further action was taken, mostly because the French could not afford to mount an invasion, especially one that would take their troops so far away from home.

It was not until the late 1790s, after the revolution had begun and the monarchy had be en deposed, that the idea of invading Egypt – which was no longer directly controlled by the Ottomans but rather governed by elite Mamluks who were helpfully prone to fighting amongst themselves and not likely to be able to repel a foreign invasion – and making it a part of the French empire was once again mooted, this time by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Talleyrand and his ambitious protegé Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon was fresh from his successful campaign in Italy and keen to embark on a quest for further military glory as soon as possible. At the beginning of 1798, Napoleon wrote to the Directory and laid out his plans, pointing out that the conquest of Egypt would give France access to the country's valuable natural resources while at the same time giving them increased control over the all-important trade routes to the east, as well as creating a link with their ally, Tipu Sahib, the ruler of the Indian state of Mysore. It would also have the added advantage of antagonising the British, who also sought to control the same trade routes and relied on access to Egypt. In addition, for Napoleon the campaign would be enormously personally satisfying as he regarded Egypt as the cradle of Western civilisation and believed that conquering it would significantly increase both his own prestige and that of France. He had been obsessed with Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar since his youth and walking in their footsteps would confirm his belief that he was their spiritual successor. Although the benefits of seizing control of Egypt were immediately obvious to the Directory, they were understandably hesitant to give Napoleon more power until it became clear that it would be even more beneficial to send him as far away as possible from Paris, at which point they authorised the expedition, assigning Napoleon over 40,000 soldiers and 10,000 sailors for his new army of conquest.

Thanks to the ever-present threat of British intervention, the campaign's destination was kept

This 1863 painting of Bonaparte and his chief of staff in Egypt by Gerome captures both the romance and the gruelling nature of the Egyptian campaign



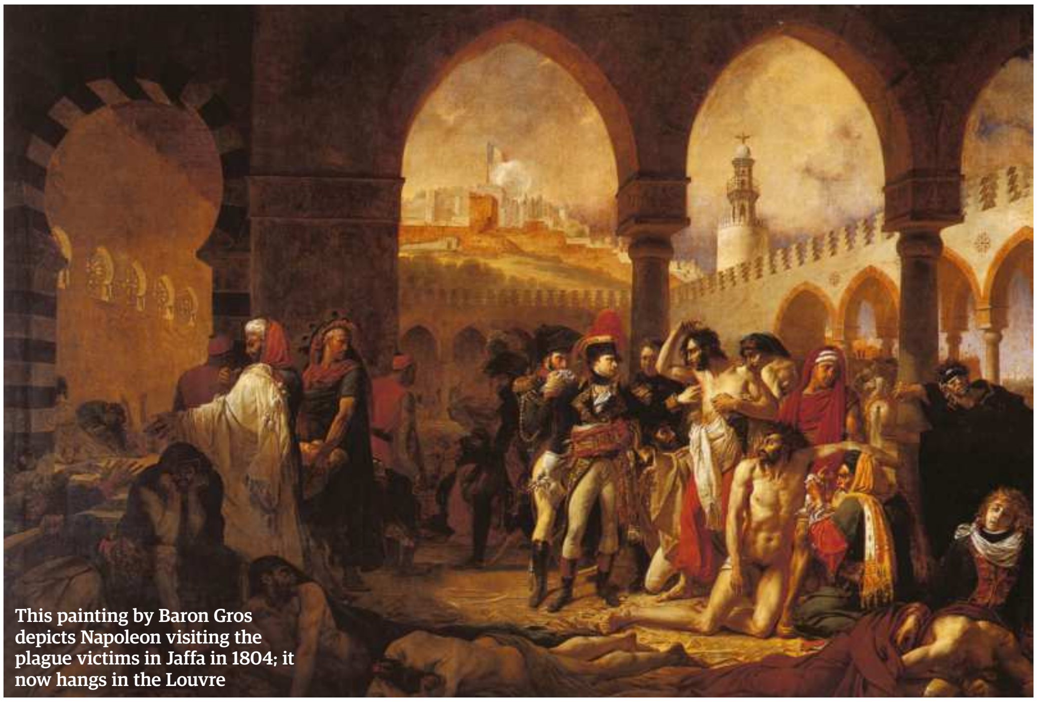


Baron Gros painted this epic depiction of Napoleon leading the charge at the Battle of the Pyramids in 1810

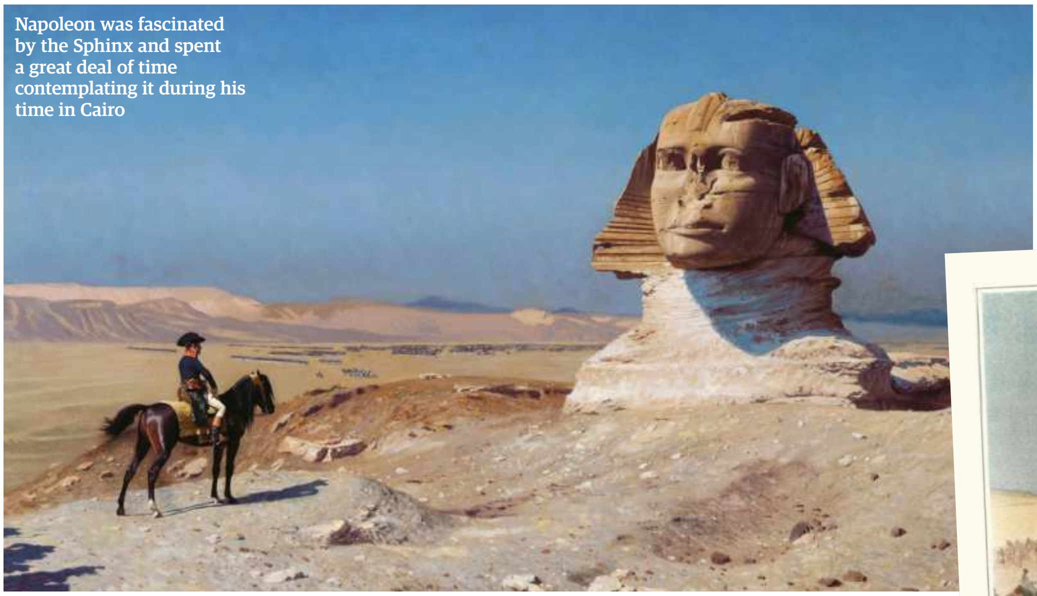
strictly secret with only Napoleon and his closest associates being privy to the information. The fleet departed Toulon on 19 May 1798, with Napoleon on board the appropriately named L'Orient, and began their expedition with the conquest of Malta before continuing on to Alexandria, which they reached on 1 July. As usual, Napoleon moved swiftly, prompted by the ominous presence of a British fleet and the need to march as speedily as possible to Cairo in order to surprise the Mamluk forces before they had time to prepare for invasion. If Napoleon had expected an easy capitulation then he was doomed to disappointment for they were harried by Mamluk troops along the way, finally facing them in the Battle of the Pyramids on 21 July, which resulted in a decisive victory for the French and the fall of Cairo. However, Napoleon's celebrations were short-lived as on 1 August, a British fleet commanded by Lord Nelson attacked the French ships left behind at Alexandria and destroyed most of them, including Napoleon's own vessel. This defeat put an end to Napoleon's plans to dominate the Mediterranean and also left his army virtually isolated in Egypt as they were without means to leave.

Undaunted, Napoleon took up residence in Cairo and immediately set about reassuring the local population that he had the utmost respect for their Muslim religion and traditions and that he was there to liberate them from their Mamluk oppressors. Under his direction, Cairo started to take on a decidedly French flavour as Napoleon and his entourage introduced French conveniences, customs and luxuries as well as, more seriously, overhauling the administrative system and setting up a new health service, library, menagerie and an antiquities museum. Although Napoleon constantly assured the population that the French were their friends and sought only to improve their lives, his innovations were unpopular with the populace and in October 1798, they showed their disapproval by rioting and murdering every Frenchman that they could get their hands on. Napoleon quickly and violently suppressed the revolt and restored order to Cairo but not before it had exposed just how tenuous his hold on Egypt actually was.

As soon as the streets of Cairo had been restored to order, Napoleon decided that it was time to survey the rest of his new domain and headed off to Suez in order to view the remains of the ancient canal - with a view to the French creating a new one. While there he learned that the Ottomans were planning to attack and immediately marched his troops towards Syria, stopping in Gaza and Jaffa along the way before engaging with the Ottoman army at Mount Tabor, where he scored a great victory. However, a subsequent attempt to seize Acre completely failed, with the loss of almost 5,000 French troops, and the French were forced to retreat, harried by Ottoman troops as they went. Napoleon's troops were in a pitiful state as they trekked back to Cairo. Many were stricken with plague while even those who had not yet succumbed were sick of the constant heat, insufficient supplies and relentless hostility of the populace. Napoleon had left Cairo with 13,000 men and by the time he returned four months later, he had lost 1,200 in battle and another 600 to plague, while almost 2,000 more were wounded and ailing and most of the rest were just completely fed up and desperate to return home. Although Napoleon sympathised, as he himself was keen to get back to France, he was determined to stay in Egypt for a while longer, wanting to subdue the Ottoman threat before he left. In July 1799, he marched his troops to the fort of Abukir near Alexandria, which housed several members of the Ottoman ruling house as well as an enormous garrison of around 18,000 soldiers. Undaunted by the superior situation of their foe, Napoleon attacked the fort and once again scored an impressive and decisive



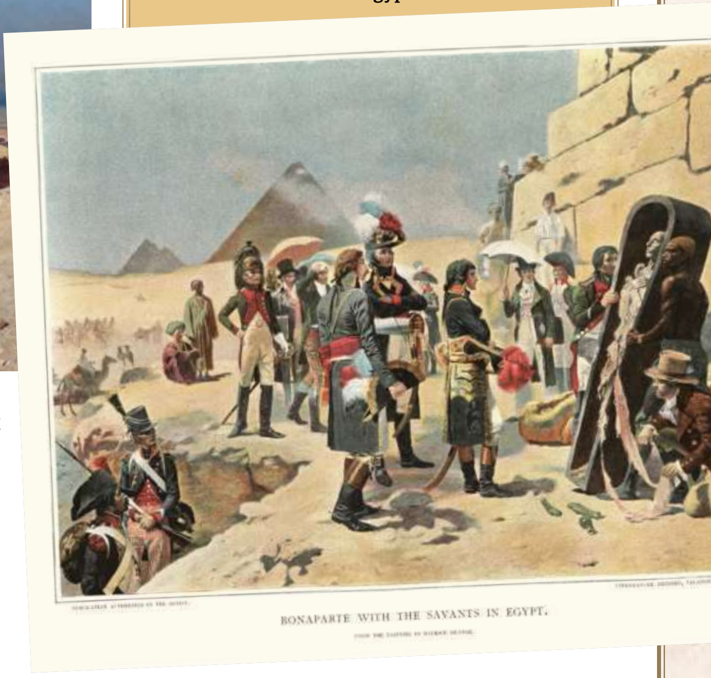
This painting by Baron Gros depicts Napoleon visiting the plague victims in Jaffa in 1804; it now hangs in the Louvre



Napoleon was fascinated by the Sphinx and spent a great deal of time contemplating it during his time in Cairo

NAPOLEON'S SCIENTISTS AND ARTISTS IN EGYPT

One of the most fascinating aspects of Napoleon's Egyptian campaign is the fact that he insisted upon being accompanied by a large entourage of 167 artists and academics, including botanists, archaeologists, scientists and engineers. This was virtually unprecedented for a military campaign, but indicative both of Napoleon's interest in science and culture and his dedication to the Enlightenment ideals that had spawned the French Revolution and also the universal fascination with Egypt. While there, the French academics and artists busied themselves establishing an Egyptian Institute to oversee their work and also building laboratories, museums, libraries and a printing press. While the engineers dedicated their time to plans for a Suez canal and a new modern infrastructure for Egypt, and the botanists excitedly recorded the Egyptian flora and fauna, the archaeologists were exploring the pyramids and making amazing discoveries like the Rosetta Stone, which was found by Bouchard in July 1799 and had huge repercussions for the study of classical languages. While all the work was valuable, it was in the nascent field of Egyptology that the most significant discoveries were made, with many of the amazing artefacts that were retrieved fuelling the existing fascination with ancient Egypt.


BONAPARTE WITH THE SAVANTS IN EGYPT.

victory, which resulted in the death of 10,000 Ottomans and the capture of the rest.

The defeat of the Ottomans at Abukir did much to restore Napoleon's reputation and the morale of his troops, who had suffered a great deal during their year in Egypt. Although there was still much to be done, Napoleon was also clearly feeling restless and daunted by the lack of men and the losses that they had already endured. Without warning, he decided to return to France in August 1799, leaving the trusted General Klébér as the new Commander in Chief of the army, which pleased the troops that had been left behind to await evacuation as Klébér was very popular - although obviously not with the local citizenry, for he was assassinated by a Syrian student in Cairo less than a year later. For Napoleon, the Egyptian campaign had not been the unqualified success that he had hoped for but he still felt a certain amount of satisfaction as he quietly boarded the France-bound frigate Muiron, for he had fulfilled his primary objectives of enhancing his own prestige, subduing the Egyptian populace and frustrating British attempts to secure a firm domination over Egypt and the trade routes to India.

The lifestyle and climate in Egypt had suited him very much and he could possibly have happily stayed for longer but his eyes were always fixed firmly on the glorious destiny that he was sure lay ahead. He also knew that it was only a matter of time before the fragile dominance that he had made fell apart, potentially bringing him down with it and so, he decided, it was time to leave and set out on the next stage of his rise to supreme power.

> “THE FRENCH WERE FORCED TO RETREAT, HARRIED BY OTTOMAN TROOPS AS THEY WENT”

FROM FIRST CONSUL TO EMPEROR

Napoleon wasn't content with military power and influence. He knew that if he wanted to reign supreme, he needed to rule the political arena too

Words **Catherine Curzon**

Though Napoleon's ambitious plans for French expansion took him away from Europe and into Egypt, he remained keenly abreast of European matters and one in particular was of more concern to him than others. The French Directory government, it seemed, was more unpopular than ever before and the nation was bankrupt, with the people of France bearing the brunt. For a man like Napoleon, who had ambition and reputation to spare, as well as a keen eye on winning power, this was the perfect time to strike.

Napoleon returned to Paris in 1799 without being summoned, a clear sign if one were needed that he considered himself very much his own man. The Directory government carped and complained but there was nothing they could do to punish him and besides, they were a lone dissenting voice in a sea of cheering approval. The people of Paris welcomed Napoleon back as a returning hero, a man of action who had tirelessly and bravely fought for French influence across Europe while at home, the Directory had done nothing but drive the country into the ground. The time had come, Napoleon knew, to turn his popularity into power.

As the citizens lauded his name, Napoleon gathered his brother and president of the Council of Five Hundred, Lucien Bonaparte; directors Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès and Joseph Fouché; Roger Ducos, who was the speaker of the Council of Five Hundred; and Foreign Minister Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord. Between them, the men worked out the finer points of a coup d'état that would unseat the Directory.

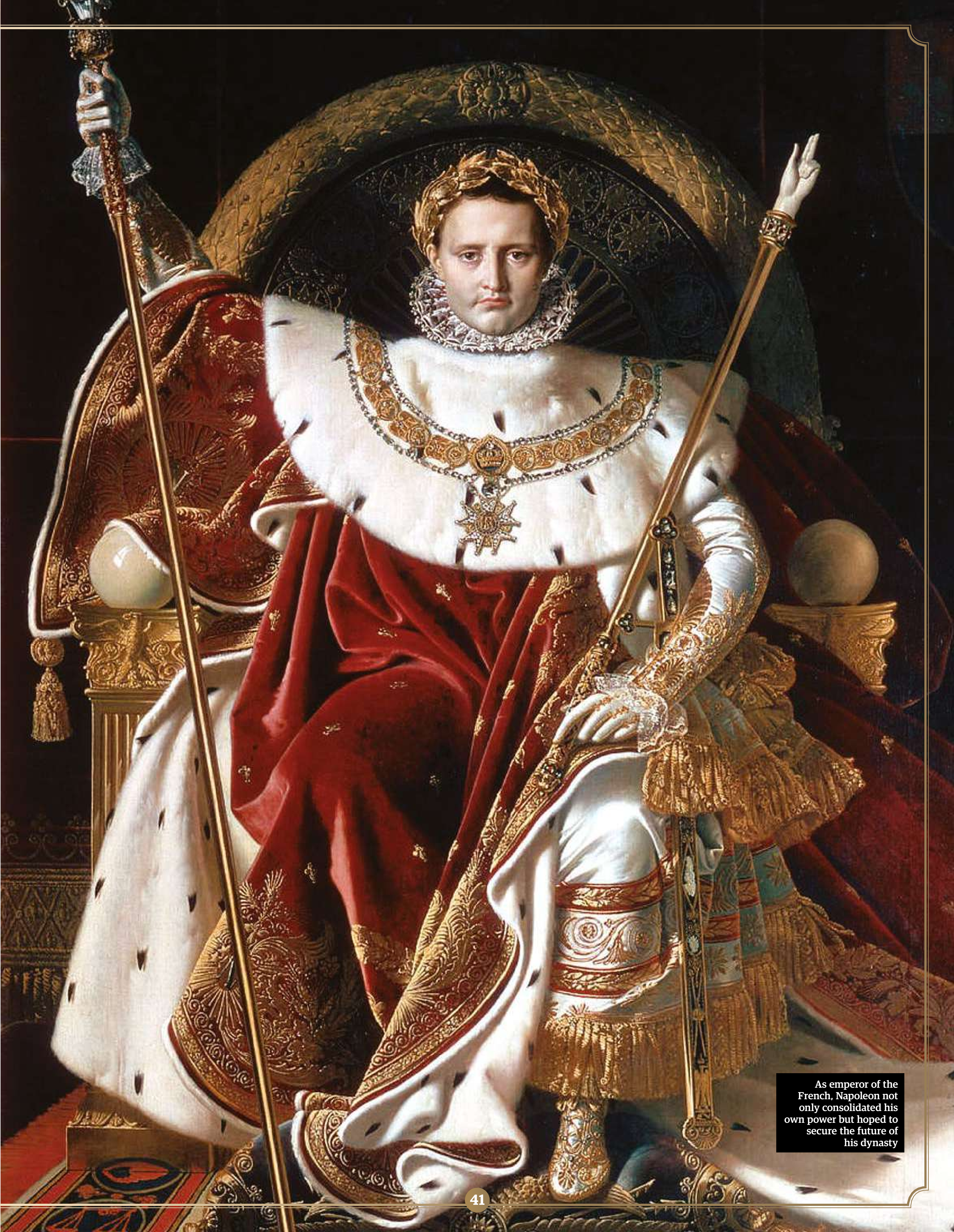
They made their move on 9 November 1799, or 18 Brumaire, falsely convincing the two ruling councils, the Ancients and the Five Hundred, that a Jacobin coup was about to happen. The councils fled Paris, placing the capital in Napoleon's hands. Meanwhile, Sieyès and Ducos resigned, taking fellow director Paul Barras with them and leaving just two hobbled directors still in office. By the next day the Councils were aware that the coup was coming not from outside, but from within. However, at that stage there was little they could do to prevent it.

When Napoleon addressed the two councils, he was met with outright hostility and accusations of treason and betrayal. Yet Napoleon had been wise in his choice of conspirators and between them, the politicians were accomplished and ambitious enough to pull off the seemingly unthinkable. They pointed to the streets of Paris and asked why nobody had come out in favour of the Directory when the public had rallied to celebrate Napoleon's return to France. The country was tired of revolution, tired of deprivation and tired of politicians. They wanted a new start and that, said the men behind the coup, could only be provided by Napoleon.

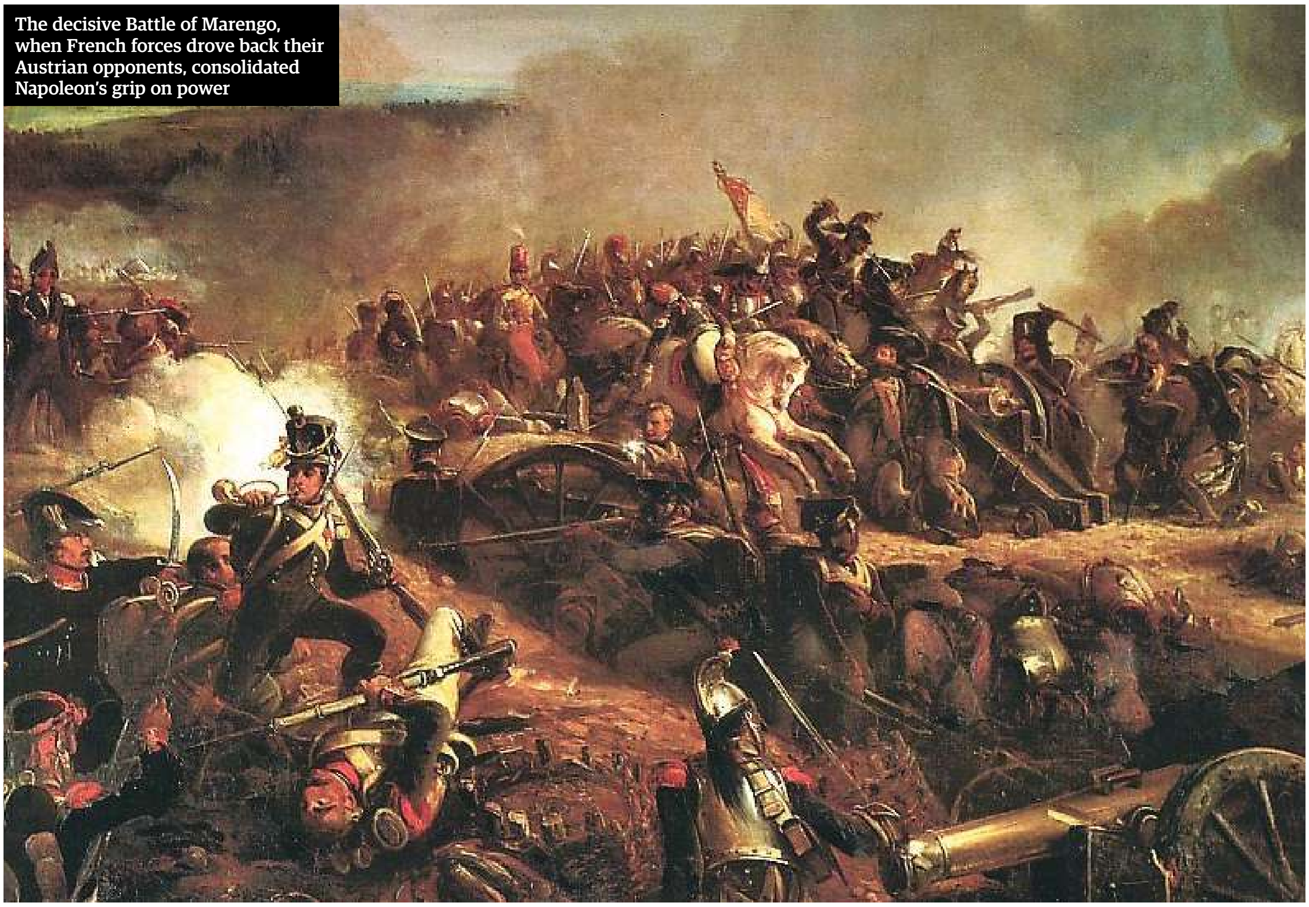
As 18 Brumaire reached its conclusion, the choice faced by officials was a simple one between capitulation and resistance. Those who dared to choose the latter were exiled or arrested and those who remained drew up a perfunctory Constitution of the Year VIII, the first constitution since the Revolution to contain no Declaration of Rights. This constitution, which Sieyès oversaw, rewrote the administrative structure of France. Rather than a Directory of five members, equal in power, it proposed that France be led by a first consul and two junior consuls, who would serve for a term of ten years. There would be three further bodies, consisting of a Conservative Senate, a Tribunate, and a Legislative Body. When Sieyès drew up the new constitution he imagined that he would be the natural choice for first consul, but he had reckoned without Napoleon.

Napoleon completely rewrote Sieyès' constitution, who effectively launched a coup of his own against that which he had already supported. It was Napoleon's version of the Constitution of the Year VIII that was accepted, and central to it was the clause that he alone would rule as first consul, with the assemblies and the two junior consuls entirely under his control.

The constitution was voted into law by 3 million votes against just 1,567, a majority of almost 100 per cent. In fact that figure of 3 million was double the actual figure. Not for the last time, Lucien



As emperor of the French, Napoleon not only consolidated his own power but hoped to secure the future of his dynasty



The decisive Battle of Marengo, when French forces drove back their Austrian opponents, consolidated Napoleon's grip on power

When Napoleon crowned himself emperor of the French, the ceremony was one of the grandest Paris had ever witnessed

Bonaparte had massaged the returns to present a landslide of support for the proposed Consulate. To outside eyes it was a democratic election to establish a democratic republic. In fact, it was the first steps on the road to a Napoleonic dictatorship.

Napoleon might have achieved his ambition of becoming first consul but his position was far from secure. When it came to consolidation, it would take a battle to cement his status.

That battle took place on 14 June 1800 at Marengo when Napoleon's army faced the Austrian forces near the city of Alessandria in Italy. For Napoleon, it proved a vital engagement. The French were caught off-guard by Austria's advance on Genoa and Napoleon took to his horse, famously leading his troops over the Alps in May. Here the French engaged the Austrians, misled by a double agent who sent them to the north, away from the real location of the planned attack. As the French forces approached the village of Marengo, Napoleon realised the duplicity and recalled those troops who were headed north, ordering them to engage with Austria. Though the Austrian forces initially had the upper hand and sent the French into retreat, that all changed when General Desaix arrived in the late afternoon with reinforcements.

Now the French hit back hard, using artillery to cause confusion and cover their cavalry charge. It scattered the Austrians, leaving them fleeing towards Alessandria. The French gave chase, killing, wounding or capturing 14,000 opponents and giving Napoleon one of his most important victories, though Desaix fell in the battle.

Napoleon returned to France a hero once more and when royalists attempted to assassinate him in the plot of the rue Saint-Nicaise, killing and

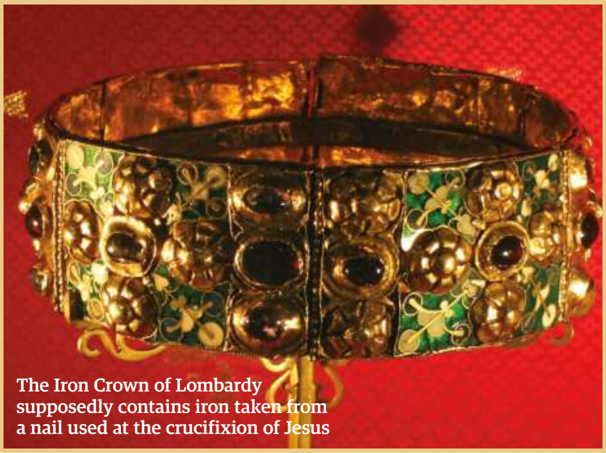
THE IRON CROWN

When Napoleon crowned himself king of Italy on 26 May 1805, he placed the Iron Crown of Lombardy on his own head and declared, "God gave it to me, beware whoever touches it".

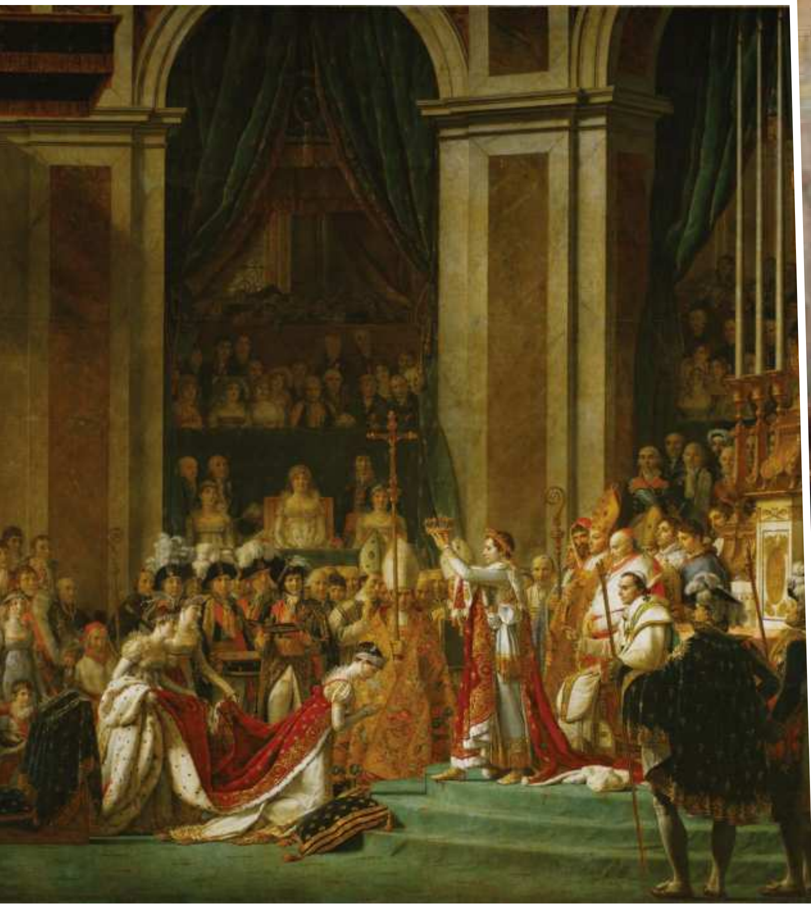
The crown is one of the oldest royal insignias in Christendom. This circlet of gold and gemstones was supposedly made for St Helena around a central band of iron that was once a nail on the cross. For centuries the crown had been used in the coronations of the kings of Italy. Charlemagne himself wore it when he was crowned king of the Lombards in the 8th century, as did many Holy Roman emperors who came after.

Napoleon would certainly have appreciated Charlemagne's connection with the Iron Crown of Lombardy. In conquering Italy, he had followed in the footsteps of that legendary monarch and just like Charlemagne before him, had every intention to expand his own empire across the continent.

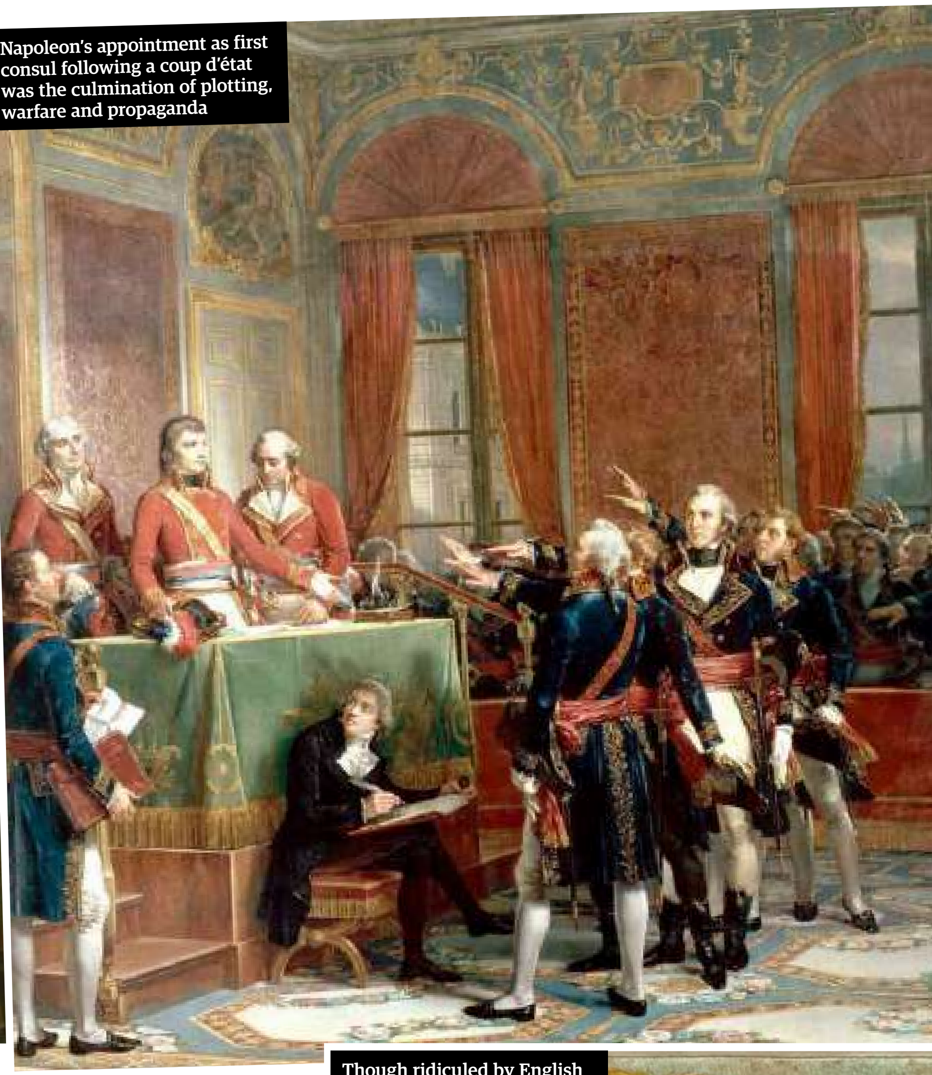
Napoleon founded the Order of the Iron Crown in 1805 and on its insignia, the French Imperial Eagle familiar from the banners of the Grande Armée is depicted atop the Iron Crown. This forever united a potent symbol of ancient power and God's chosen with that of the emperor of the French.



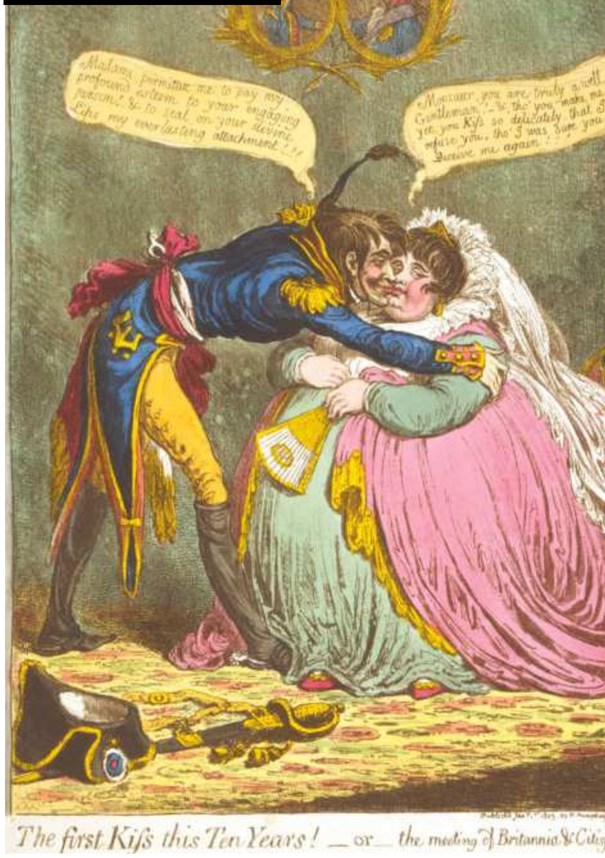
The Iron Crown of Lombardy supposedly contains iron taken from a nail used at the crucifixion of Jesus



Napoleon's appointment as first consul following a coup d'état was the culmination of plotting, warfare and propaganda



Though ridiculed by English caricaturists, the Treaty of Amiens secured peace between France and Britain. It lasted just one year


"Madame, permittez me to pay my profound esteem to your engaging person! & to seal on your divine Lips my everlasting attachment!!!"
"Monsieur you are truly a well Gentleman! – & tho' you make me yet you Kiſs so delicately that I refuse you, tho' I was sure you deceive me again!"
The first Kiſs this Ten Years! — or — the meeting of Britannia & Citi

> "NAPOLEON SWELLED HIS POWER BASE WITH A SERIES OF TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS... SILENCING HIS OPPONENTS"

wounding several bystanders, he managed to turn that to his advantage.

Having survived the plot of the rue Saint-Nicaise, Napoleon used it as an excuse to exile 130 Jacobins, regardless of whether they were involved. Four conspirators were executed and he annulled the Assemblies, effectively removing the last democratic opponents to his regime.

Now safe in his position as first consul, Napoleon swelled his power base with a series of treaties and agreements, shrinking the influence of the church, increasing France's territorial gains and silencing his opponents. When the Treaty of Amiens was signed in 1802, Napoleon used it as the launchpad for his Constitution of the Year X, which named him first consul for life, in recognition of the great work he had done reaching a peaceful accord with the United Kingdom. Supposedly, 99.7 per cent of the public voted him into this lifelong office.

Under Napoleon, the people of France prospered but the implications of a royalist plot against his life that resulted in the execution of the Duke of Enghien left the Republic rattled. Should the unthinkable happen and Napoleon die, what would become of France? It was decided that the best way to secure the Republic's future was to give Napoleon the hereditary title of emperor, which would secure continuation on his death and on 18 May 1804, the Senate approved the creation of the French Empire. In a glittering coronation on 2 December 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself the emperor of the French.

In a country exhausted by revolution, war and deprivation, Napoleon was in the right place at the right time. More than able, dedicated and devoted to France - as well as himself - he alone seemed to guarantee stability, prosperity and an end to turmoil. As he accepted the laurel wreath and Charlemagne's crown, he became a symbol of the new France, a France without Bourbon rule, without bickering politicians or revolutionaries in the streets. In becoming emperor of the French, Napoleon won perhaps the greatest victory he had ever fought.

EMPEROR NAPOLEON

EMPEROR NAPOLEON

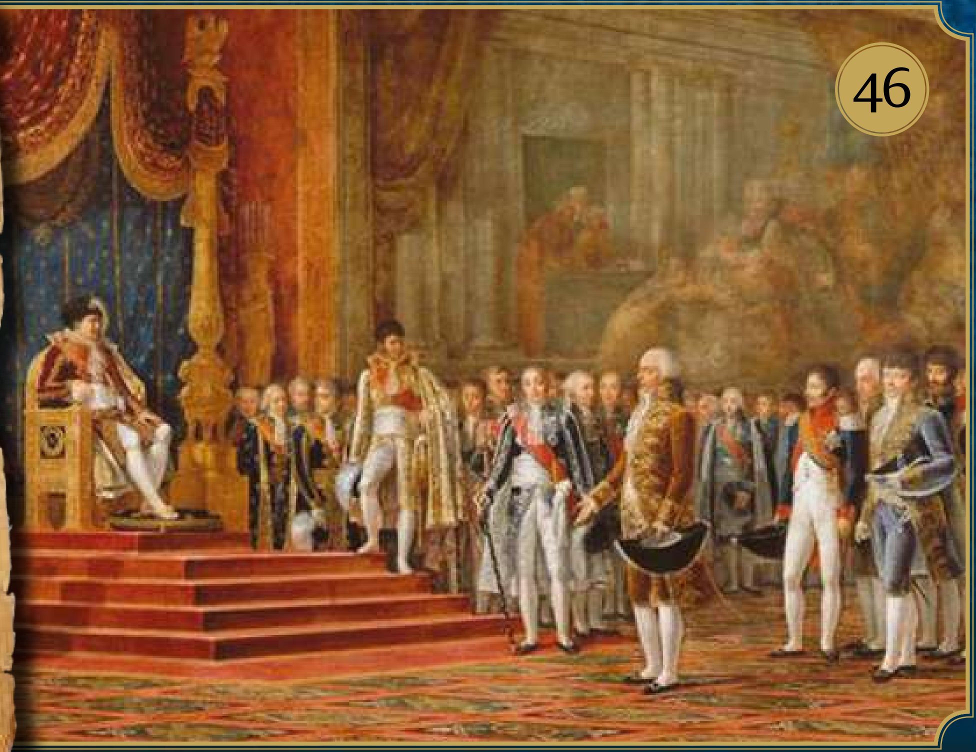
046 THE TUILERIES PALACE
How the former royal residence became Napoleon's home

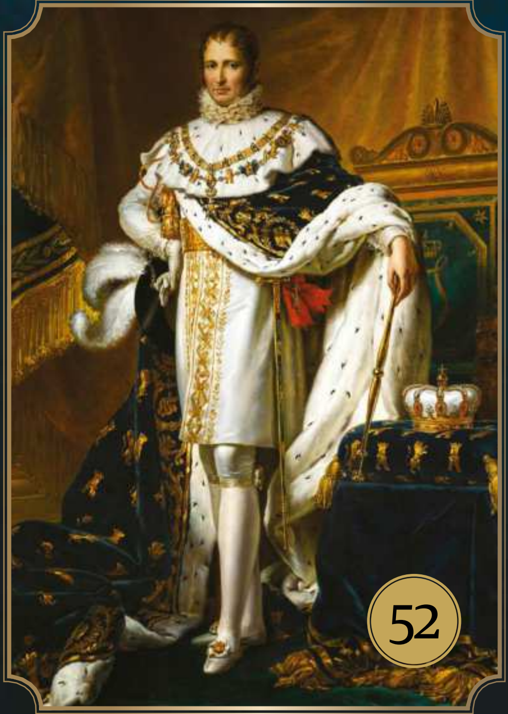
052 FAMILY, FRIENDS & ALLIES
The key figures in Napoleon's career

056 NELSON AND THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR
Challenging Britain's naval domination

064 THE NAPOLEONIC CODE
The reforms that continue to shape France

068 AUSTERLITZ
The downfall of the Holy Roman Empire





076 NAPOLEON & RELIGION
The emperor's rivalry with the Vatican

082 MARIE LOUISE
Napoleon's search for a second wife who could provide him with an heir

088 THE PENINSULAR WAR
Why the French occupation of the Iberian Peninsula failed

096 THE MARCH TO MOSCOW
How an attempt to invade Russia left the Grand Armée decimated

104 BATTLE OF BORODINO
The horrors of the single bloodiest day's battle in history at that point spelled the beginning of the end for Napoleon

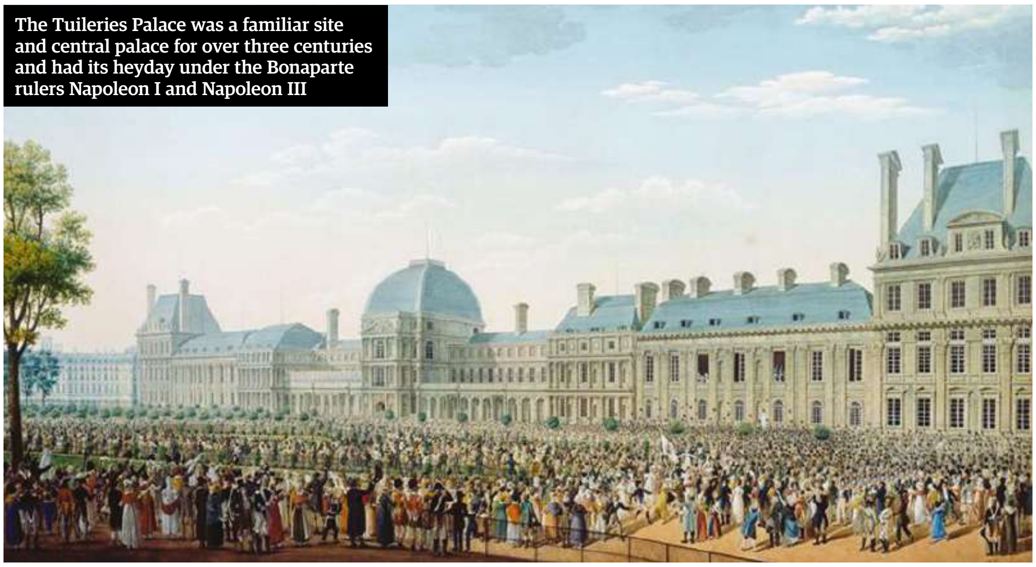
THE TUILERIES PALACE

The Tuileries Palace owed its existence to a royal tragedy in the middle of the 16th century and would witness some of the most dramatic events in French royal history in the following centuries

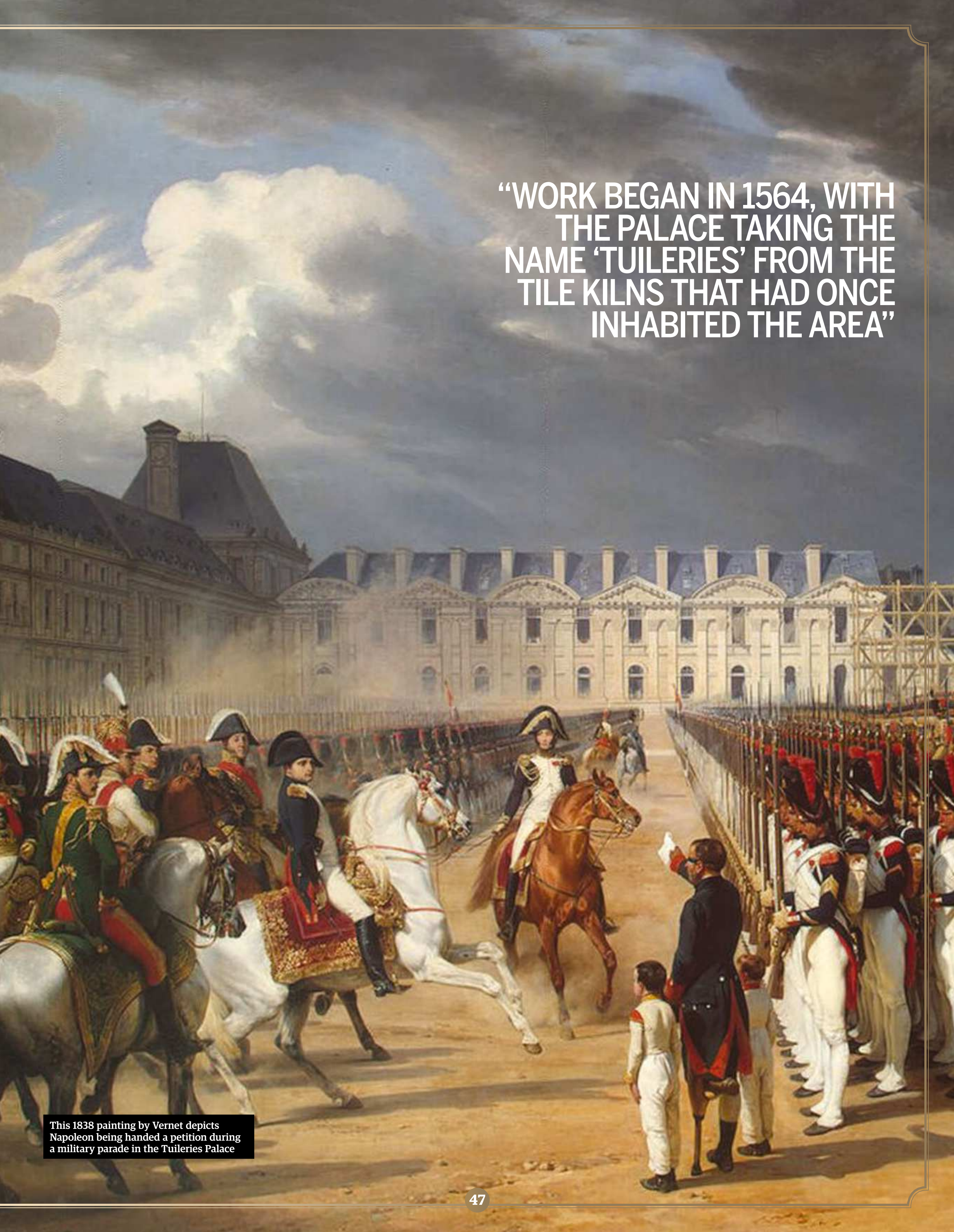
Words **Melanie Clegg**

When Henri II of France was accidentally killed during a jousting tournament organised to celebrate the marriage of his daughter Elisabeth to Philip II of Spain, his wife Catherine de Medici was absolutely devastated. She donned the heavy black mourning clothes that she would wear for the rest of her life and did her best to avoid spending time in the Hôtel Les Tournelles, the elderly and sadly outmoded royal residence where her husband had died and which was located in the Marais district of Paris. She had always hated the hotel anyway as it was extremely old fashioned, especially when compared to the magnificent Medici palaces in Florence, where she had spent her childhood, and so seized this opportunity to abandon it and then have it demolished, using the proceeds to build her own more modern palace in a decidedly Italianate style. For this grand and ambitious project, Catherine decided to work with the talented architect Philibert de l'Orme. He was responsible for Catherine's favourite chateau at Chenonceau as well as Henri II's modifications to the Palace of Fontainebleau, and was capable of producing the imposing yet harmonious building that she had in mind. Work began in 1564, with the projected palace taking the name 'Tuileries' from the tile kilns that had once inhabited the area. It would stand alone for a number of decades before Henri IV extended it towards the river and added the Grande Galerie in order to link it to the old royal palace of the Louvre and create a huge cohesive palatial complex in the heart of Paris, capable of housing the king, his growing brood of children, his court as well as countless hangers on.

When the young King Louis XIV returned to Paris after the Fronde wars had ended, he took up residence in the Louvre and immediately began work on enlarging and modernising the Tuileries in line with contemporary tastes. Louis had been badly shaken by his experiences during the Fronde, which had necessitated him escaping in secret from the capital and taking up residence in the countryside until it was over. He was keen both to emphasise his majestic importance and also keep the people of Paris, whom he distrusted and feared, at a distance. Extending and remodelling the Tuileries in order to make it larger and more magnificent effectively fulfilled both of these functions, until he eventually decided to abandon Paris altogether and decamp to Versailles in 1672, taking his court with him. The palace was essentially abandoned for the next 44 years until Louis XIV was succeeded by his five-year-old great grandson Louis XV in 1715 and the court returned to Paris by order of Louis' regent, his cousin Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, whose Parisian residence, the Palais-Royal, lay just next door.

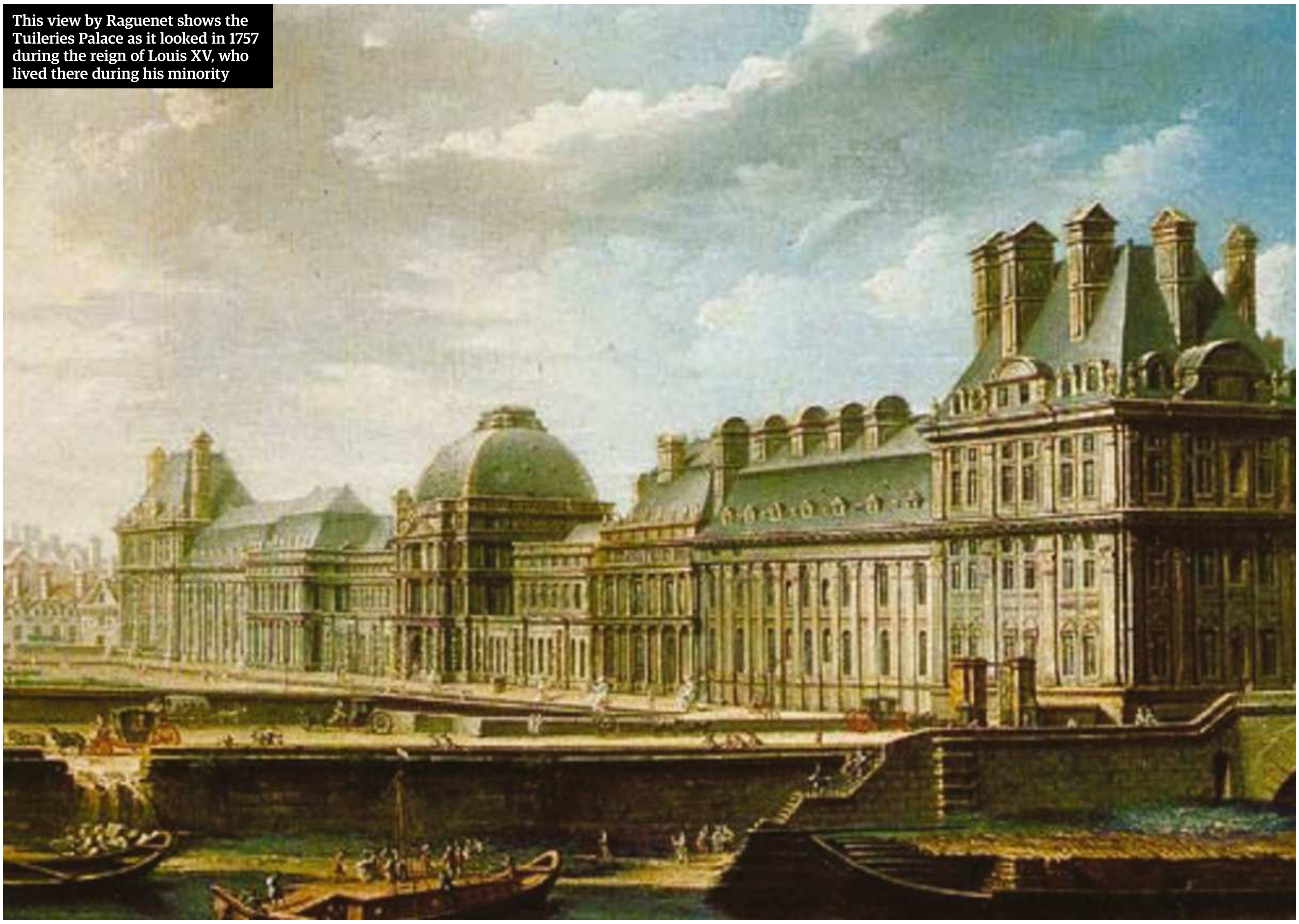


The Tuileries Palace was a familiar site and central palace for over three centuries and had its heyday under the Bonaparte rulers Napoleon I and Napoleon III

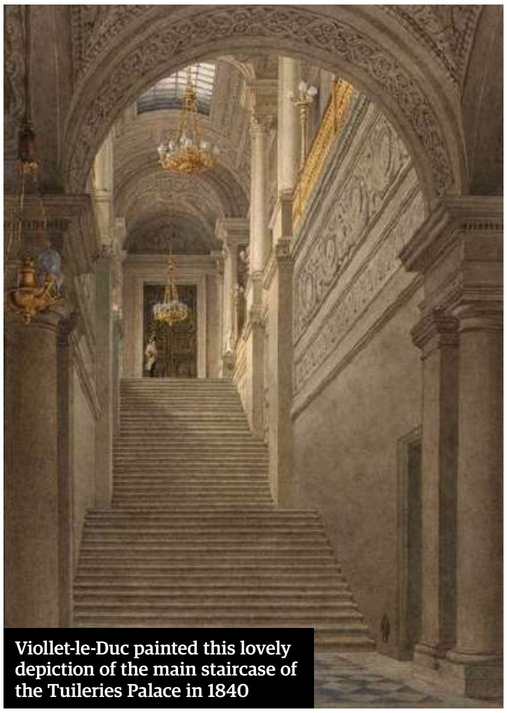


“WORK BEGAN IN 1564, WITH THE PALACE TAKING THE NAME ‘TUILERIES’ FROM THE TILE KILNS THAT HAD ONCE INHABITED THE AREA”

This 1838 painting by Vernet depicts Napoleon being handed a petition during a military parade in the Tuileries Palace



This view by Raguenet shows the Tuileries Palace as it looked in 1757 during the reign of Louis XV, who lived there during his minority

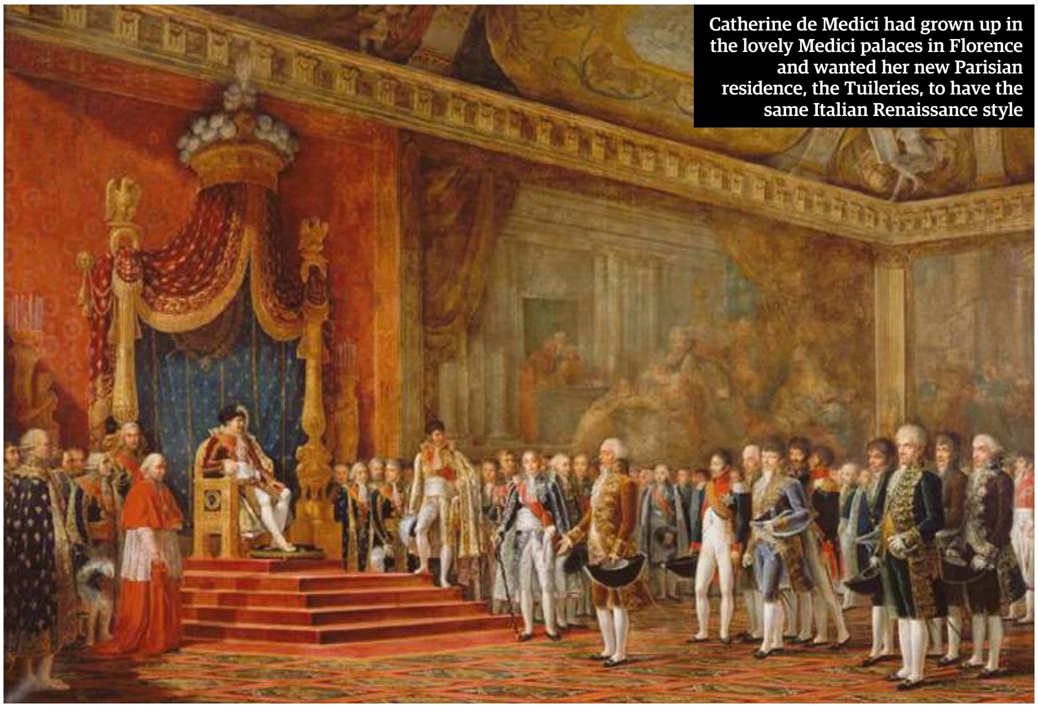


Viollet-le-Duc painted this lovely depiction of the main staircase of the Tuileries Palace in 1840

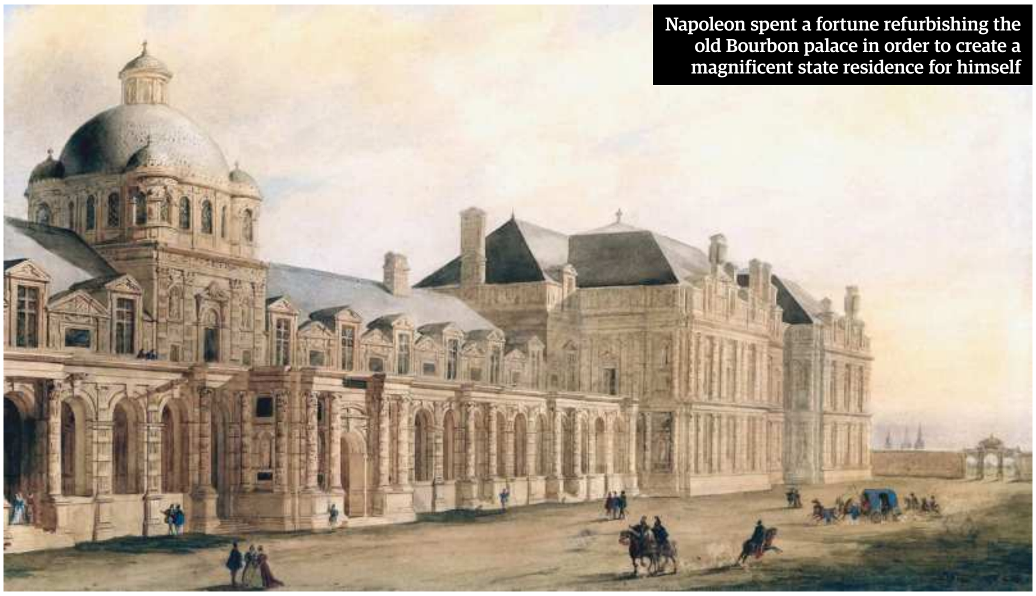
"THE PALACE WAS SACKED BY A MOB, FORCING THE ROYAL FAMILY TO FLEE"

When Louis XV returned to Versailles in 1722, the old palace lay virtually neglected, only coming to life when the king made one of his visits to his capital – visits that became increasingly rare as Louis' popularity diminished. Although his successor, Louis XVI, did not spend much time at the Tuileries, having inherited his predecessors' mistrust of the capricious Parisians, his wife Marie Antoinette would occasionally spend the night in the royal apartments when it was too late for her to return to Versailles after she had attended an opera ball. However, when the royal family were forced to leave Versailles in October 1789, it was to the Tuileries that they, their huge entourage of courtiers and servants and several hundred cartloads of precious furniture and other furnishings were taken by their captors. It remained the official royal residence until August 1792, when the palace was stormed and completely sacked by a mob, forcing the royal family to flee and seek sanctuary from the Legislative Assembly, the revolutionary parliament, which held its meetings in the palace's old riding school. The increasingly dilapidated palace would then be used as the offices and meeting rooms of various government departments, including the notorious Committee of Public Safety, which met in the former apartments of Louis XVI's sister Madame Elisabeth in the Pavillon de Flore.

After spending the best part of a century being neglected by a succession of rulers who preferred to live in Versailles and then wilfully abused by republicans who saw it as a symbol of the tyrannical monarchy that they had worked hard to overthrow, the Tuileries' fortunes changed for the better in 1800 when it became the primary residence of the first consul, Napoleon Bonaparte and his wife Joséphine. The old palace was in a

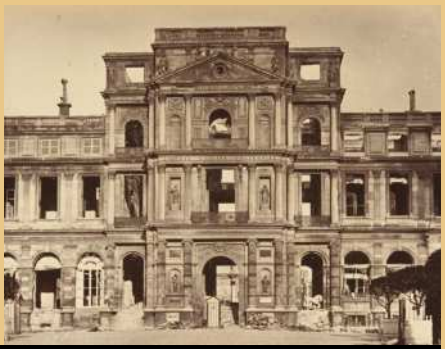


Catherine de Medici had grown up in the lovely Medici palaces in Florence and wanted her new Parisian residence, the Tuileries, to have the same Italian Renaissance style



Napoleon spent a fortune refurbishing the old Bourbon palace in order to create a magnificent state residence for himself

THE FALL OF THE TUILERIES

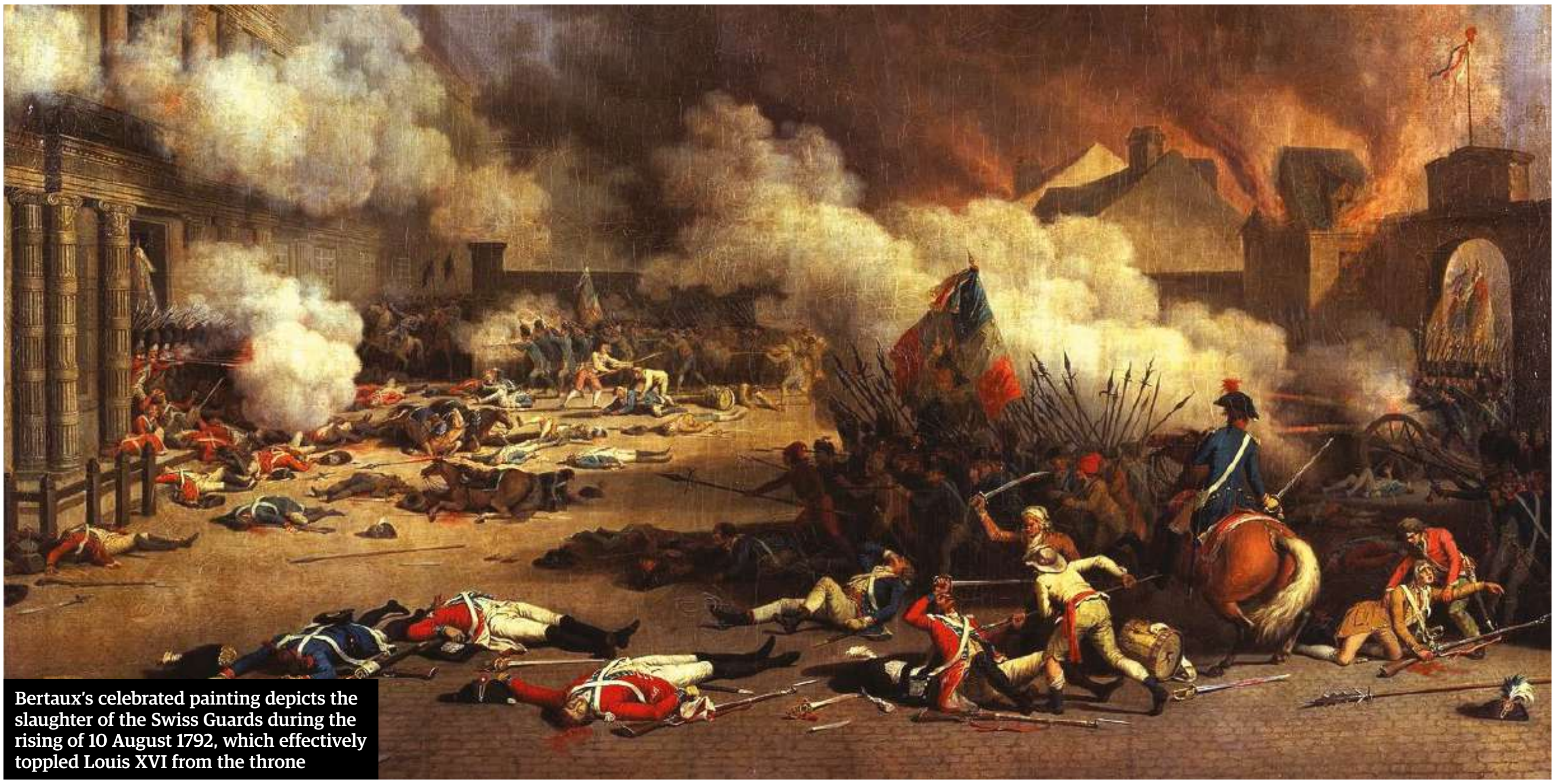


It took just 48 hours to reduce the grand old Tuileries Palace, which had housed royalty for over three centuries, to rubble

After Napoleon's departure in 1815, the Tuileries would be taken over by the restored Bourbon kings, Louis XVIII and then his brother Charles X, before becoming home to Napoleon III, son of Napoleon's step-daughter Hortense de Beauharnais and his brother Louis Bonaparte, when he took power in 1848. The Tuileries enjoyed a glittering heyday as the residence of Napoleon and his beautiful wife, Empress Eugenie, who lavishly refurbished the palace so that it was more splendid than ever. They even hosted Queen Victoria there during a state visit to Paris in 1855. However, the palace was abandoned after Napoleon III was deposed in 1870 and in 1871 orders were given by the Paris Commune, the radical socialist government that had temporarily replaced the Empire, to have it burnt down as a symbol of monarchic oppression. The Tuileries was set on fire on 23 May 1871 and completely gutted because the fire was allowed to rage virtually unchecked for 48 hours and explosives were used to blow up the central dome. The ruins remained standing for 11 years before the government ordered it to be demolished and the pieces sold off - ignoring pleas from artists, architectures and academics to have the building restored to its former glory.

sorry state and thanks to the thorough ransacking it had endured on 10 August 1792, rather lacking in elegant furnishings, while the once exquisite mouldings and panelling required extensive repair. Three thousand workmen worked nonstop for two months to restore the Tuileries to its former glory, modernising the heating and other conveniences and making it a palatial residence fit for its new residents, who moved in with a great deal of fuss and ceremony on 19 February 1800. "Come, little Creole, get into the bed of your masters," Napoleon said to Joséphine as he carried her to bed that night in the apartments that had once housed Marie Antoinette. Although the rooms were completely redecorated to Joséphine's own taste with blue and white silk with gold trimmings in the bedchamber and violet taffeta on the walls of her salon, she still complained to her daughter Hortense that she could feel Marie Antoinette's ghost "asking what I am doing in her bed" every night. Napoleon had little time for Joséphine's superstitious unease - as far as he was concerned, he had every right to be living in the Tuileries and this was just yet another step on his way to the ultimate power that he believed to be his destiny. At the Tuileries, he presided over what was effectively a royal court with increasingly ostentatious ceremonial, which revolved around the daily routine of the first consul and his wife, whose lives were now strictly governed by the court etiquette that everyone thought had been banished with the removal of the Bourbon monarchs but which steadily started to creep back when Napoleon took up residence in the Tuileries. Napoleon was in his element as his years in the army had given him a taste for strict routine and display but Joséphine, used to the louche lifestyle of an aristocratic socialite, was bored and felt isolated and restricted in the Tuileries - although no one would have guessed for she appeared as charming and sociable as ever at the court functions that she now presided over in the palace's refurbished state rooms. One of these rooms was lined with 14 full-length portraits of her husband's Marshals alternated with huge canvases depicting the most important French victories of his Italian and Egyptian campaigns, while gold bees, the symbol of the Bonaparte family, were everywhere - on the curtains, incorporated into the panelling and even woven into the carpets.

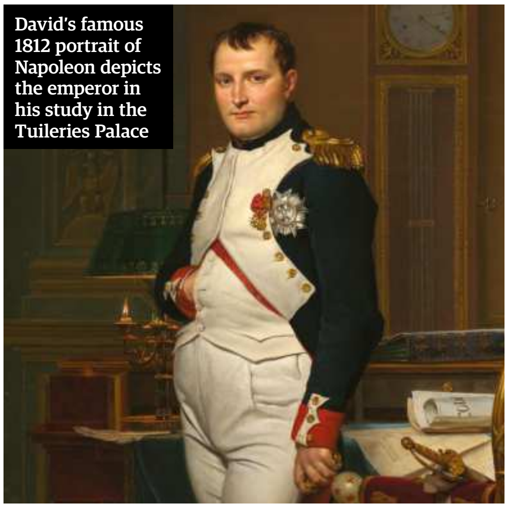
Like Louis XIV, Napoleon understood the importance of using display and ceremony to evoke the appearance of power and ensure that no one dared to question his authority or right to rule. Napoleon's refurbishment of the Tuileries



Bertaux's celebrated painting depicts the slaughter of the Swiss Guards during the rising of 10 August 1792, which effectively toppled Louis XVI from the throne

was an essential part of his plans to seize power for himself and he spent a great deal of time personally overseeing the project. While many of the original features were retained, as after all it was important that people should remember that it had formerly been the Paris residence of the Bourbon kings, the palace's rooms were redecorated in a highly fashionable neoclassical style that was intended to evoke the 'florid opulence of ancient Rome' undercut by a dash of patrician austerity and would eventually become known as 'Empire style' thanks to its enthusiastic espousal by Napoleon.

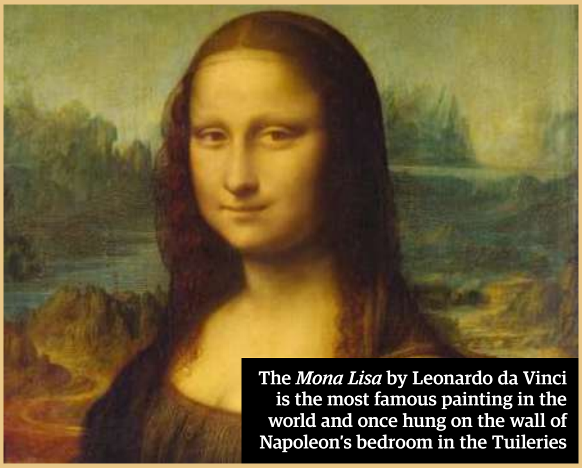
To bring his vision of imperial splendour to life, Napoleon employed the celebrated designer duo Charles Percier and Pierre Fontaine, the chief proponents of the new neoclassical craze, to overhaul the interior decoration. Percier and Fontaine, who had begun their career in set design for the Paris Opera and were masters of dramatic flair, fell to their work with gusto, creating lavish reception rooms that served as a glittering backdrop to Napoleon's frequent court functions, attended by his generals in their splendid military uniforms and their wives, who usually wore the white silk high waisted gowns that Napoleon particularly loved to see women wearing. Percier and Fontaine had been challenged by the fact that the palace's reception rooms invariably only had one single window, which left them rather dark and dingy, and had liberally employed mirrors throughout in order to reflect more light and make the rooms appear brighter, which of course also made them all the more splendid in the evenings



David's famous 1812 portrait of Napoleon depicts the emperor in his study in the Tuileries Palace

THE MONA LISA

Although the Tuileries was home to many celebrated women, such as Catherine de Medici, Empress Joséphine and Empress Eugenie, during its three centuries as a royal palace, perhaps the most famous of all was the *Mona Lisa*, known to the French as *La Joconde*, and one of the most celebrated and recognisable works of art in the world. Thought to be a portrait of Lisa Gherardini, the painting was mostly worked on between 1503 and 1506 by Italian Renaissance maestro Leonardo da Vinci, who brought it with him when he moved to France in 1516 at the invitation of Francois I. The portrait, already hailed as a masterpiece, entered the French royal collection around the time of Leonardo's death in 1519 and was initially kept at Fontainebleau before moving to Versailles, where it remained until it was taken to the Louvre after the French Revolution. Napoleon was so impressed by the work that he ordered it taken off display and placed into his bedchamber in the Tuileries, where he could admire it in private. The painting would hit headlines in 1911 when it was stolen from the Louvre and remained lost for over two years until the thief tried to sell it to the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. The artist Picasso was initially suspected of the crime until he managed to clear his name. Nowadays, the painting is visited by over 9 million people every year, most of whom only visit the Louvre in order to see it.



The *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci is the most famous painting in the world and once hung on the wall of Napoleon's bedroom in the Tuileries when all the candles were lit and the ladies wore their finest diamonds. After Napoleon's coronation as emperor in 1804, a splendid throne room was installed in the palace, complete with a custom-made throne designed by Fontaine and specifically proportioned to make the rather tiny Napoleon look more impressive and majestic on his podium. On gala evenings, the ladies of Napoleon's court would be escorted up the splendid staircase to the room lined with portraits of Napoleon's Marshals and then would progress through the Salon Bleu and the Salon d'Apollon until they reached the throne room, which was closely guarded so only those of the highest rank were allowed to enter – in the exact same way that access to the Bourbon monarchs had been strictly regulated according to status. The only difference was that it was impossible to forget that virtually every man at Napoleon's court was a soldier, which gave gatherings a distinctively masculine flavour.

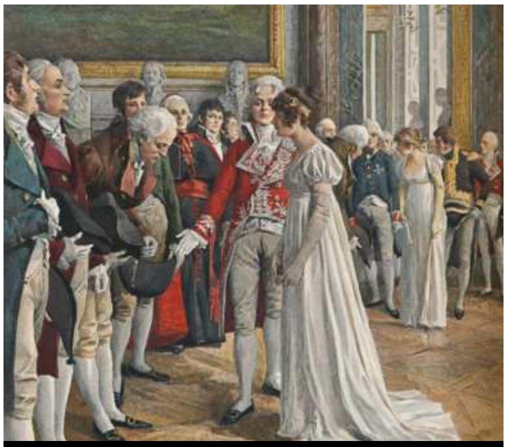
The court became even more formal after Napoleon divorced Joséphine and in 1810 married the Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria, daughter of Emperor Francis II and great niece of Marie Antoinette. Marrying Marie Louise was an enormous coup for Napoleon, whose family were minor nobility, and he was determined not to let the side down. Marie Louise had grown up in the magnificent Imperial palaces of Vienna, which rivalled Versailles for gilt-encrusted opulence, and so Napoleon resolved to refurbish the rooms recently vacated by Joséphine and make them even more splendid. He hired the artist Pierre-Paul Prud'hon to completely overhaul the new empress' rooms, which included designing furniture, in the fashionable neoclassical style, of course. The great centrepiece of the rooms was a wonderful and elaborate jewel cabinet which had initially been designed for Empress Joséphine by the architect Charles Percier and made by royal furniture supplier Jacob-Desmalter, but was so ambitious that it wasn't completed until 1812, after Joséphine's departure. The entire Tuileries had recently undergone a radical transformation anyway when he created a new wing at a right angle to Catherine de Medici's original structure, which effectively created a huge courtyard in the front of the building – a perfect venue for the outdoor parts of the celebrations of Napoleon and Marie Louise's wedding, which took place in the Tuileries. Used as she was to the splendours of the Viennese palaces, Marie Louise must still have been dazzled by the sumptuous grandeur of the Tuileries and the magnificence of the art collection that Napoleon had housed there. While most of the former royal art collection had been put on display to the public in the Louvre after being removed from Versailles, Fontainebleau and the other royal residences, plenty of choice pieces had been earmarked for the Tuileries – including the *Mona Lisa*, which Napoleon appropriated for his own bedchamber. There were also hundreds of looted paintings and sculptures, taken from the great art collections of Europe and including works by Rubens, Tintoretto, Velasquez and Titian.

There were also the huge paintings of battles that Napoleon had commissioned over the years and the many portraits of himself and his family – although one assumes that those of Joséphine were quietly removed before Marie Louise's arrival. She was even completely removed from the composition of one work: David's 1810 painting *The Distribution Of The Eagle Standards*. Napoleon left the Tuileries for the very last time on 17 April 1815 during the brief time between his escape from his first period of exile on Elba and his defeat at Waterloo and final abdication.

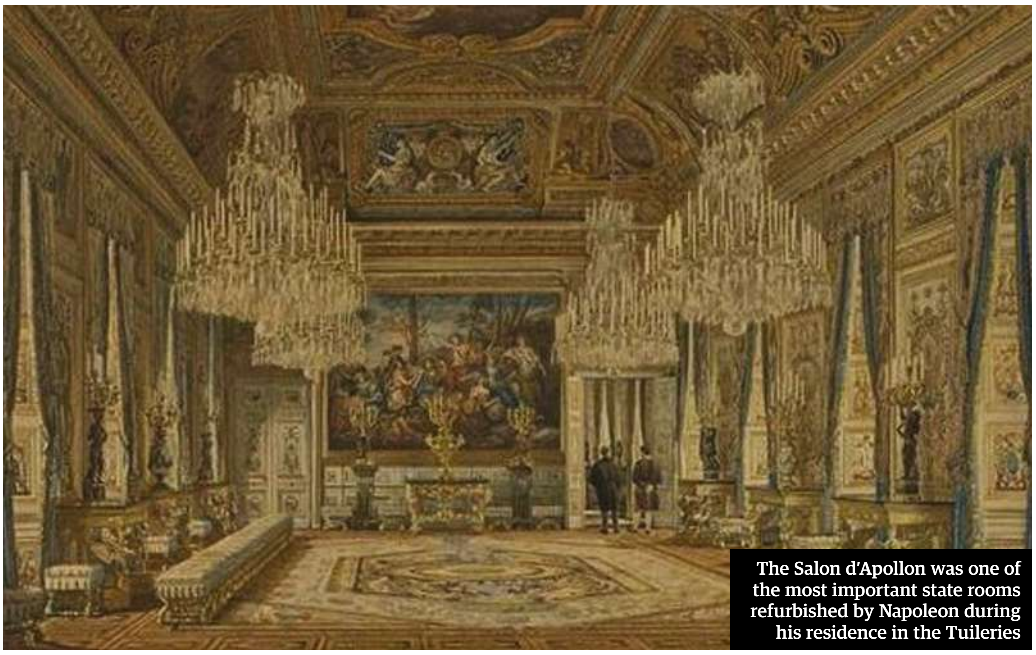
He had returned to the palace just a few weeks earlier but when it became clear that Marie Louise and their son weren't going to be returning from Vienna to join him, the depressed and beleaguered emperor decided to decamp to the smaller Elysée Palace, which would feel less empty.

We don't know how he felt as he walked through his opulent reception rooms and then down the stairs for the very last time but no doubt he reflected on the 15 years he had been in residence; years that had seen him rise from first consul to emperor, divorce Joséphine, marry an archduchess, become a father, suffer defeats, celebrate victories and preside over one of the most glittering and dynamic royal courts that the world has ever seen.

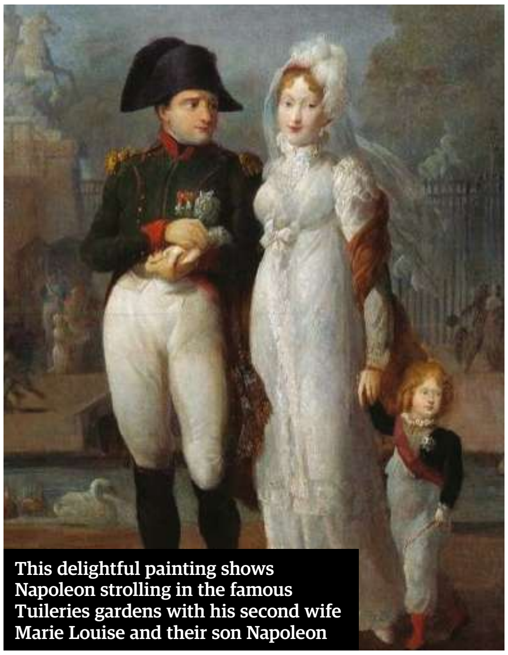
“THE CENTREPIECE WAS A WONDERFUL AND ELABORATE JEWEL CABINET”



Although Joséphine did not enjoy living in the Tuileries and was often bored by state occasions, she was often trusted to host official events there in Napoleon's absence



The Salon d'Apollon was one of the most important state rooms refurbished by Napoleon during his residence in the Tuileries



This delightful painting shows Napoleon strolling in the famous Tuileries gardens with his second wife Marie Louise and their son Napoleon

FAMILY, FRIENDS & ALLIES

If you wanted power and prestige in Napoleonic France one thing was certain – having a friend named Napoleon could do wonders for your career!

Words **Catherine Curzon**

LOUIS NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE, KING OF HOLLAND

LIVED: 1778-1846 NATIONALITY: FRENCH

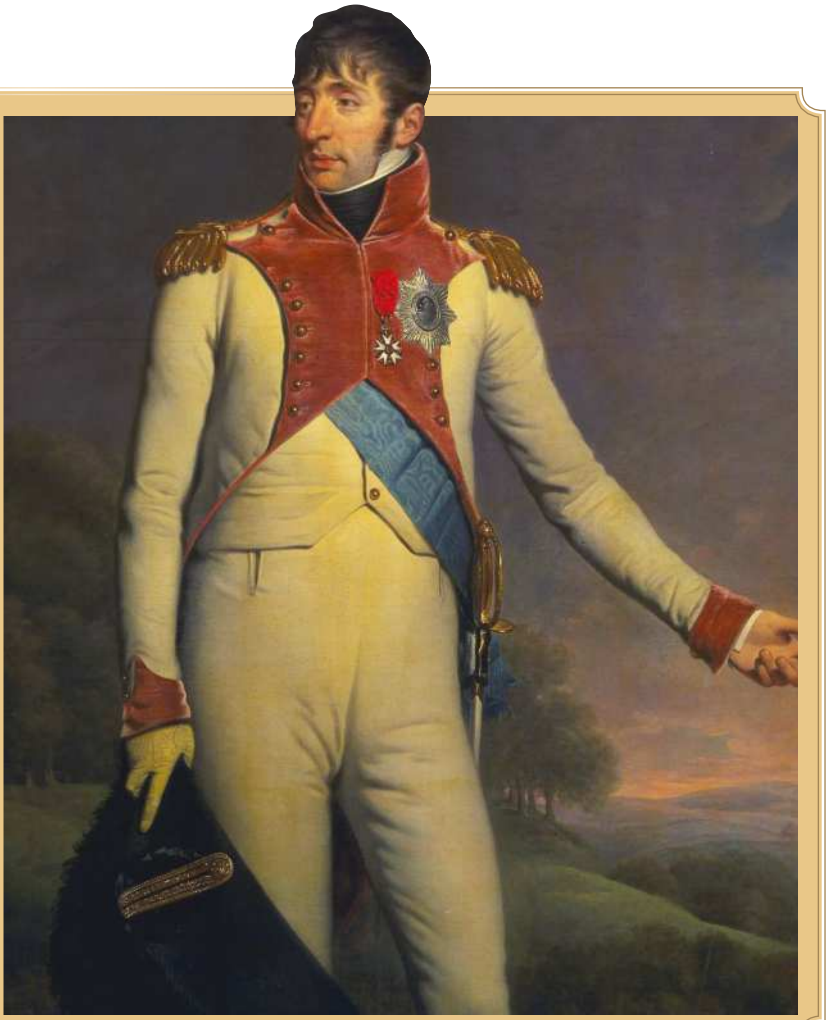
Louis was just under a decade Napoleon's junior and like his brother, he was a soldier. He served alongside Napoleon in Egypt and by the age of 25 had achieved the rank of general, which although did have something to do with his sibling's influence, was also because of his skill. In addition to his career, Napoleon involved himself in Louis' private life too and in 1802, Napoleon arranged a marriage between his reluctant stepdaughter, Hortense de Beauharnais, and his brother.

When Napoleon established the Kingdom of Holland in 1806, he cast about for someone to serve as a compliant monarch. Louis was the obvious candidate for the job, but things didn't quite work that way. Once he had been crowned King of Holland, he was determined to establish himself as an independent sovereign. He learned to speak Dutch and declared himself a Dutch citizen. He even commanded his court to follow suit and renounce their French citizenship but this was a step too far for Hortense. She refused to follow the order, determined to remain a Frenchwoman to her last breath.

Louis' reign ended when he dared refuse his brother's request to supply Dutch troops for his invasion of Russia. Napoleon retaliated by withdrawing his French forces from Holland, leaving it wide open for the British to invade in 1809. With Louis woefully unprepared without French backing, Napoleon helpfully suggested that he should abdicate. Louis had no choice but to comply.

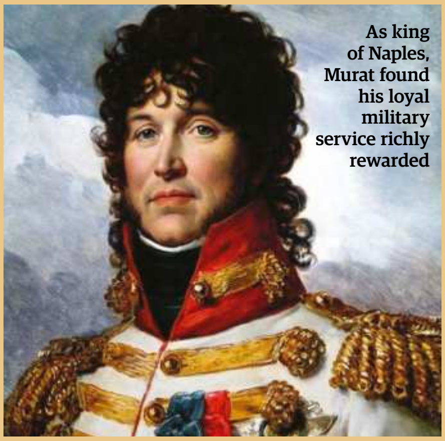
The former king retired to lick his wounds, but he never stopped believing that he was the rightful monarch of Holland. He returned just once, making a visit in 1840 in which the people greeted him like a long-lost friend.

Louis had little interest in politicking, brushing off those who proclaimed him Emperor of the French after the death of Joseph-Napoléon Bonaparte in 1844. He died just two years later, never having been restored to the throne he loved.



JOACHIM MURAT, KING OF NAPLES

LIVED: 1767-1815
NATIONALITY: FRENCH



As king of Naples, Murat found his loyal military service richly rewarded

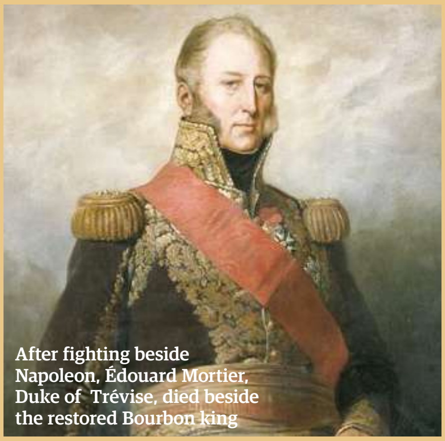
Few men enjoyed such resounding military success of Joachim Murat. By the time he joined Napoleon as aide-de-camp in 1796, he was already a highly respected soldier and his influence was reinforced when he married Caroline, Napoleon's sister. His rise through the ranks was swift and in 1804 he was made a Marshal of France. Four years later, he added the crown of Naples to his trophies.

Yet despite his laurels, Murat remained a soldier. He fought for France until the decisive Leipzig defeat when, facing Italian demands for his throne, he fled for Corsica. There he planned to regroup and come back fighting to claim Naples once and for all.

Instead of a resounding victory, Murat's return resulted in his capture by Ferdinand IV of Naples. The once dandy king was sentenced to death by firing squad for treason and eyewitnesses to his execution report that he was fearless to the end.

ÉDOUARD MORTIER, DUKE OF TRÉVISE

LIVED: 1768-1835
NATIONALITY: FRENCH



After fighting beside Napoleon, Édouard Mortier, Duke of Trévise, died beside the restored Bourbon king

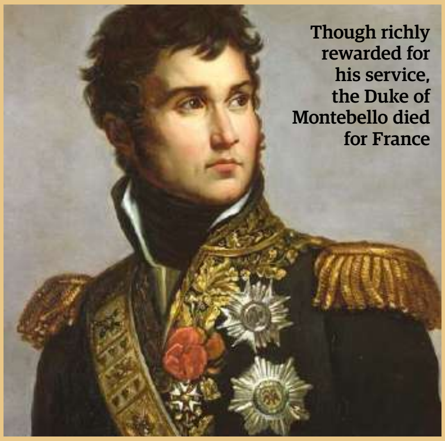
Mortier won Napoleon's favour when he steered France through the occupation of Hanover, which resulted in the electorate's surrender to French forces. Napoleon named him as a Marshal of France and rewarded him with high-profile commands. Yet Mortier made a crucial error at the Battle of Austerlitz when he ignored Napoleon's advice on troop movements, temporarily giving Austria and Russia the upper hand.

From that day, Mortier strove to regain Napoleon's trust. And he did, when he assisted in the capture of Hesse-Kassel, receiving a dukedom for his service. Though he was isolated after the fall of Napoleon he eventually regained Bourbon favour and in 1834 became prime minister.

Mortier died in 1835 when an attempt was made to assassinate King Louis-Philippe of France. The king survived but 18 men who were alongside him weren't so lucky. Among them was Mortier.

JEAN LANNES, DUKE OF MONTEBELLO

LIVED: 1769-1809
NATIONALITY: FRENCH

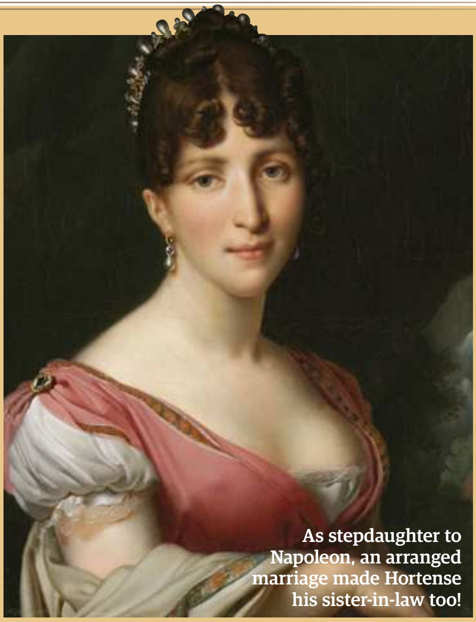


Though richly rewarded for his service, the Duke of Montebello died for France

From humble beginnings, Jean Lannes won the favour of Napoleon thanks to his selfless bravery, which saw him become one of the emperor's most trusted confidantes.

Though respected as a soldier, as a diplomat Lannes fared less well and after a short stint as ambassador to Portugal, he was back on the battlefield. As one of the original Marshals of France, Lannes was given his own command in Spain, where he beat the odds to capture and defend Saragossa. He always feared Napoleon's ambition would lead to disaster, though.

Lannes was right. During an assault on the Danube at the Battle of Aspern-Essling, Lannes suffered a blow from a cannonball that smashed through his knees. Napoleon rushed to his friend's side, embracing him as he underwent agonising surgery. Lannes died a week later, leaving Napoleon to count the cost of ambition.



As stepdaughter to Napoleon, an arranged marriage made Hortense his sister-in-law too!

HORTENSE DE BEAUHARNAIS, QUEEN OF HOLLAND

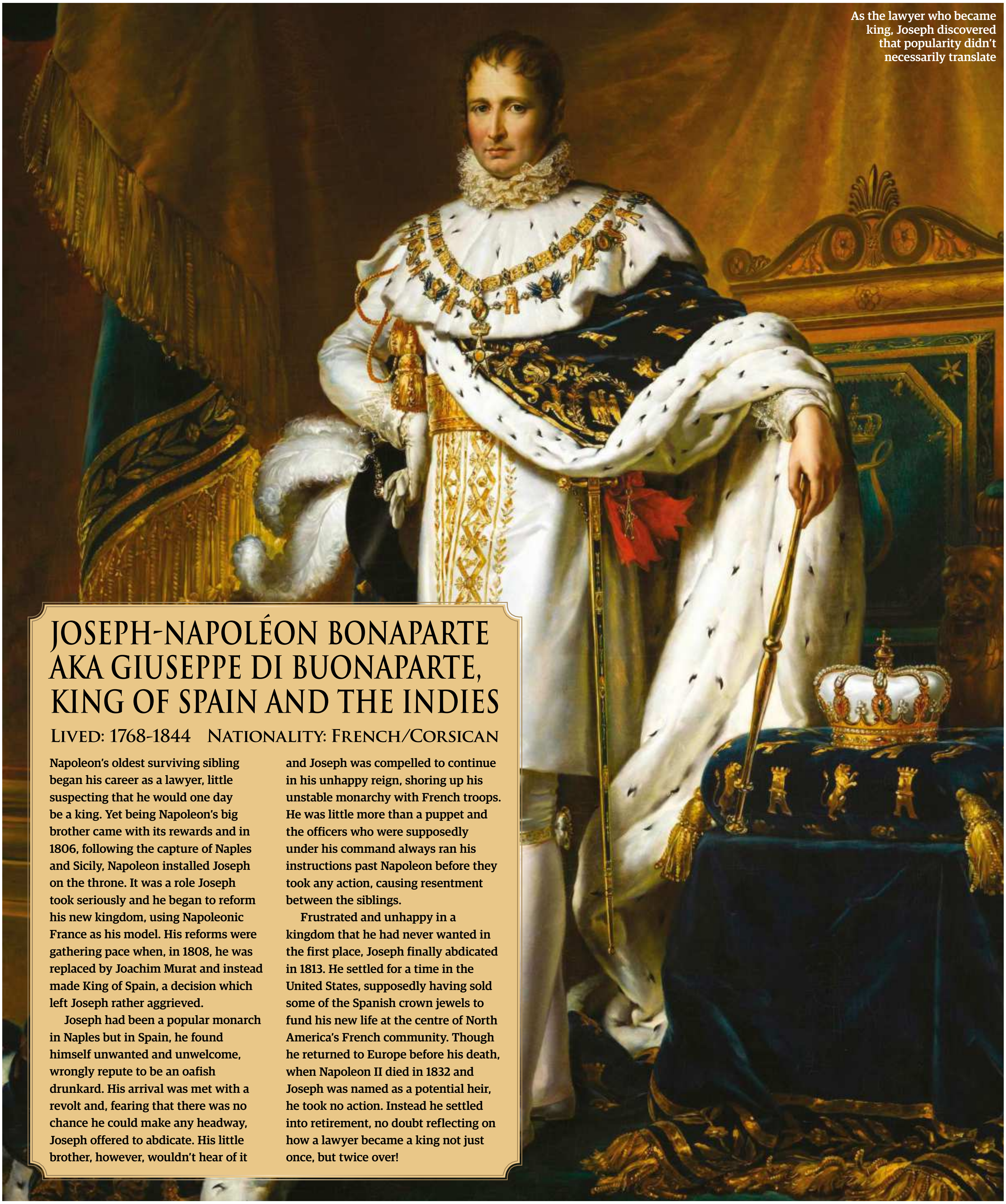
LIVED: 1783-1837 NATIONALITY: FRENCH

Though she would one day be a queen, Hortense de Beauharnais's life got off to a shaky start when her father, Alexandre, Viscount Beauharnais, died on the Revolutionary guillotine in 1794. Two years later her mother, Joséphine, married Napoleon. This signalled a marked improvement in Hortense's fortunes, but the personal price would be high.

Napoleon's friends and family were pawns in his own power plays and Hortense was no different. Searching for a trustworthy woman to marry his brother Louis, Napoleon settled on Hortense. She resisted at first but ultimately, she had little choice but to face her fate.

Louis and Hortense married in 1802 and from the off, they didn't get on. When Louis was crowned king of Holland in 1806 Hortense was far from happy. She bitterly resented the fact that she had to leave her adored Paris for her husband's new kingdom. Though Hortense was popular in Holland, she refused to obey her husband's wishes that she renounce her French citizenship and become Dutch. She finally returned home to France in 1807 following the death of her son and there she remained for three years, a star at the Parisian court. It was only when Napoleon divorced Joséphine and married again that Hortense returned to Holland, for Napoleon felt having his ex-wife's daughter around wasn't the best recipe for conjugal bliss!

Hortense's days in Holland were short and she pled ill health to escape, separating from her husband in the process. Yet despite Napoleon's meddling she remained loyal and supported him during The Hundred Days. As a result, she was banished from France and spent the rest of her days in Switzerland, where she died in 1837.



As the lawyer who became king, Joseph discovered that popularity didn't necessarily translate

JOSEPH-NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE AKA GIUSEPPE DI BUONAPARTE, KING OF SPAIN AND THE INDIES

LIVED: 1768-1844 NATIONALITY: FRENCH/CORSICAN

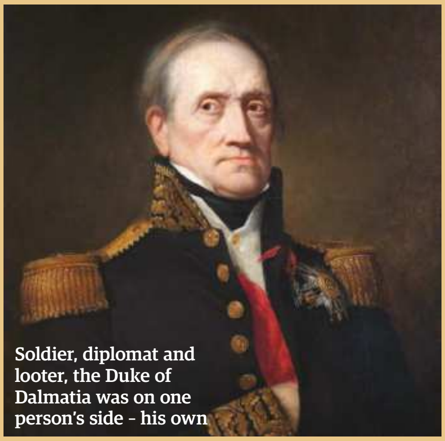
Napoleon's oldest surviving sibling began his career as a lawyer, little suspecting that he would one day be a king. Yet being Napoleon's big brother came with its rewards and in 1806, following the capture of Naples and Sicily, Napoleon installed Joseph on the throne. It was a role Joseph took seriously and he began to reform his new kingdom, using Napoleonic France as his model. His reforms were gathering pace when, in 1808, he was replaced by Joachim Murat and instead made King of Spain, a decision which left Joseph rather aggrieved.

Joseph had been a popular monarch in Naples but in Spain, he found himself unwanted and unwelcome, wrongly repute to be an oafish drunkard. His arrival was met with a revolt and, fearing that there was no chance he could make any headway, Joseph offered to abdicate. His little brother, however, wouldn't hear of it and Joseph was compelled to continue in his unhappy reign, shoring up his unstable monarchy with French troops. He was little more than a puppet and the officers who were supposedly under his command always ran his instructions past Napoleon before they took any action, causing resentment between the siblings.

Frustrated and unhappy in a kingdom that he had never wanted in the first place, Joseph finally abdicated in 1813. He settled for a time in the United States, supposedly having sold some of the Spanish crown jewels to fund his new life at the centre of North America's French community. Though he returned to Europe before his death, when Napoleon II died in 1832 and Joseph was named as a potential heir, he took no action. Instead he settled into retirement, no doubt reflecting on how a lawyer became a king not just once, but twice over!

JEAN-DE-DIEU SOULT, DUKE OF DALMATIA

LIVED: 1769-1851
NATIONALITY: FRENCH



Soldier, diplomat and looter, the Duke of Dalmatia was on one person's side - his own

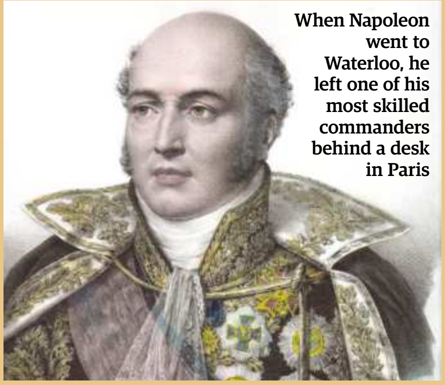
Soult was a man who had no great love for Napoleon, but he knew better than to show it. He had been a comrade of Jean Victor Marie Moreau, the friend whom Napoleon eventually exiled, and he naturally disliked Napoleon for his treatment of Moreau.

A man of great ambition, Soult served with distinction and built a personal fortune by looting as he went. Soult showed his true colours when Napoleon abdicated. He switched sides and served as minister of war until Napoleon's return, at which point he switched back, fighting bravely at Waterloo.

When Napoleon was defeated, Soult spent a short time in exile. He returned in 1820 as a Marshal of France, declaring himself a royalist until it made sense to be a Bonapartist again. Few men flip-flopped so often and so successfully as Soult, the man who was loyal to himself above all.

LOUIS-NICOLAS DAVOUT, DUKE OF AUERSTAEDT

LIVED: 1770-1823
NATIONALITY: FRENCH



When Napoleon went to Waterloo, he left one of his most skilled commanders behind a desk in Paris

This career soldier came to Napoleon's attention during his service in Egypt and Napoleon arranged for him to marry into the family.

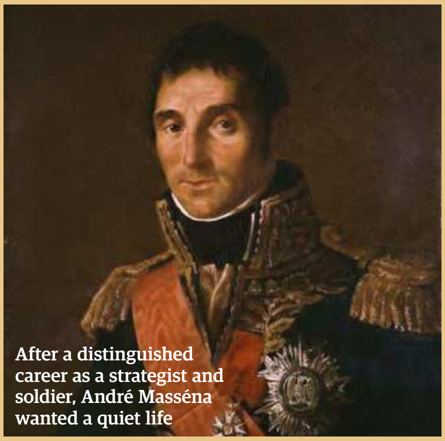
Though Davout was the youngest of the 18 original Marshals, there's no doubting his skill. He beat the Prussians at Auerstädt, despite being outnumbered, and was awarded a dukedom in gratitude. Davout seemed unstoppable until the Russian campaign, when he lost Krasny.

At Hamburg, Davout earned a cruel reputation when he ordered the expulsion of thousands of people who died in a freezing winter. Promoted to minister of war, Napoleon kept him behind his desk, even during Waterloo. It was Davout who told Napoleon to leave Paris after his defeat.

Napoleon never forgave Davout. Though initially in disgrace, Davout eventually returned to favour with the monarchy, who recognised his remarkable military skills.

ANDRÉ MASSÉNA, DUKE OF RIVOLI

LIVED: 1758-1817
NATIONALITY: SARDINIAN

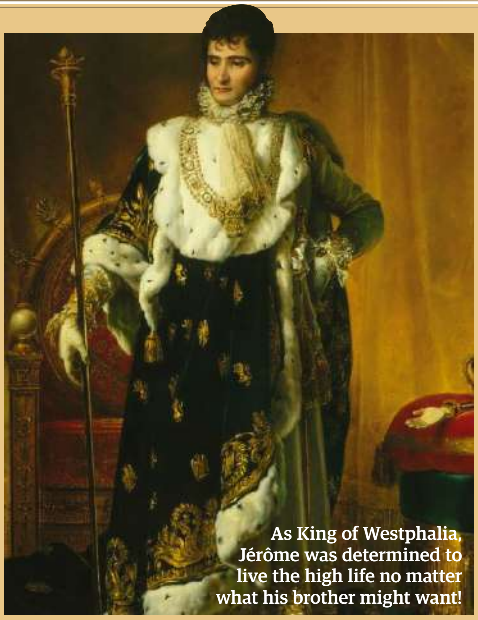


After a distinguished career as a strategist and soldier, André Masséna wanted a quiet life

Though he began his career as a cabin boy, André Masséna made his name on the battlefields of the Revolutionary Wars, becoming one of Napoleon's most favoured commanders. His decisive actions at Rivoli in 1797, where he forced the surrender of the Austrian armies, saw him feted across France.

Three years later, Masséna's besieged and exhausted forces kept Austria busy in plague-ridden Genoa so Napoleon could make his move on Marengo. Yet his reward was dismissal, with Napoleon furious that the beleaguered French had retreated from Genoa rather than staying put.

Masséna returned to favour as a Marshal of the Empire in 1804. He was once again put in command of French forces and thanks to his skill and reputation, Masséna's career survived the Bourbon restoration, but he had no appetite for factionalism. Instead he retired, living out his days peacefully in Paris.



As King of Westphalia, Jérôme was determined to live the high life no matter what his brother might want!

JÉRÔME-NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE, KING OF WESTPHALIA

LIVED: 1784-1860 NATIONALITY: FRENCH/CORSICAN

When Jérôme-Napoléon Bonaparte, youngest brother of Napoleon and member of the French Navy, married Elizabeth Patterson in Baltimore, he was just 19. Napoleon was incensed and did all he could to convince the pope to annul this unapproved attachment but the Vatican refused to comply. Napoleon took matters into his own hands, refusing Elizabeth permission to enter France and forcing a divorce on the couple, despite Jérôme's efforts to change his mind.

This shocking bit of filial interference set the standard for their relationship. When Napoleon made his brother king of Westphalia in 1807, he decided that a queen was essential, but Jérôme wouldn't be allowed to choose her. Instead Napoleon arranged for Jérôme to marry Catharina of Württemberg, whom he believed was a far more suitable consort than a girl from Baltimore!

Yet Jérôme was less interested in ruling than living like a king. Napoleon expected Jérôme to make Westphalia a model French state but instead he revelled in luxury. Napoleon attempted to teach his brother a lesson by giving him command of a legion marching on Minsk. Jérôme had other ideas. He travelled in luxury and refused to compromise on his opulent lifestyle.

Jérôme's service was far from distinguished and when Napoleon fell, he found himself as a king without a crown. After spending time in America and then Europe under the title Prince of Montfort, Jérôme returned to French politics and remained active for the rest of his days. He was recognised as the heir to the imperial throne during the reign of Napoleon III, but never reigned as emperor. Years after he lost his throne, Jérôme was named a Marshal of France in 1850.

NELSON AND THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

For Britain, Trafalgar was the last hope against a French invasion, but for Nelson, it was the final battle against a far more fearsome foe

Words **Frances White**

Just before noon on 21 October 1805, Admiral Viscount Horatio Nelson stood aboard the deck of his flagship HMS Victory. A light westerly wind whistled through the air, and in the distance he could see the frigates of the Franco-Spanish fleet. For weeks he had bided his time, patiently waiting, reviewing tactics and planning every action down to the finest detail. Now, finally the hour had come, and he signalled for his fleet to begin the attack. In less than five hours, he would experience a victory that would define his life, and a loss that would end it.

Today Nelson is remembered as one of Britain's greatest heroes – a warrior, a commander and a victor. However, when he entered this world on 29 September 1758, the sixth of 11 children, he was a sickly baby. His parents were so fearful that he would not survive that they had him baptised early. This occurrence would begin a lifelong tradition of battling and succeeding against the odds.

The Nelson family were not unknown, but they certainly weren't particularly wealthy and they had to exploit their connections to ensure a steady future for their children. Nelson's mother, Catherine Suckling, was a distant relative of Robert Walpole, first prime minister of Great Britain. However, tragically, Nelson's mother died when the boy was just nine. It was to be his maternal uncle who would have the biggest influence on his life, as aged just 12, Nelson began his naval career serving under his uncle, Captain Maurice Suckling, on the HMS Raisonnable.

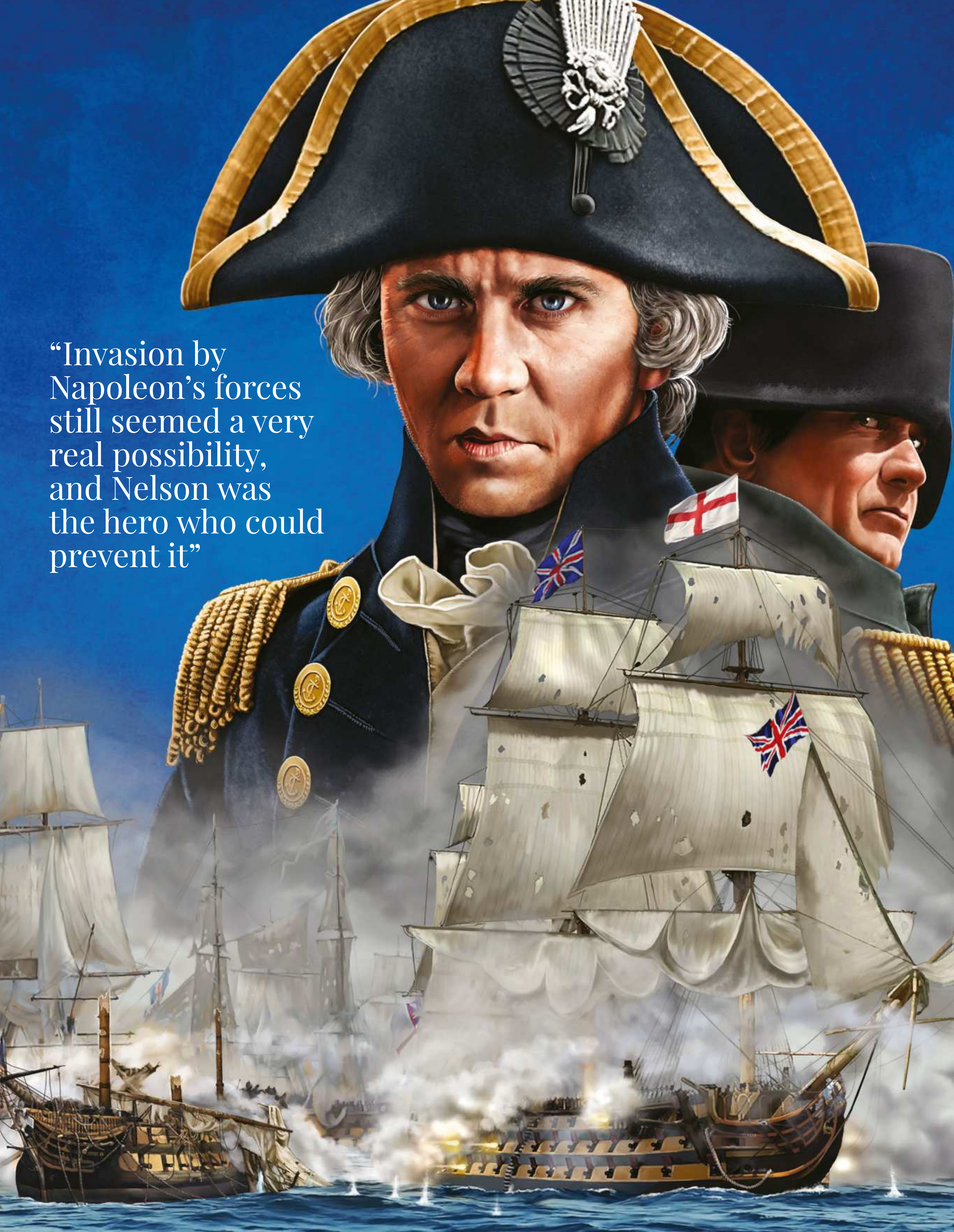
> "NELSON CROSSED SWORDS WITH A YOUNG FRENCH ARTILLERY OFFICER BY THE NAME OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE"

When Nelson joined the navy, it was in the lowest ranks. However, perhaps the result of being a sixth child in a large family, he sought glory above all else. This quest to make a name for himself and achieve renown fuelled a work ethic that soon impressed his superiors and saw him ascend through the ranks at a rapid rate. This was particularly impressive for a boy who suffered from extreme sea-sickness.

After crossing the Atlantic several times, Nelson, eager to experience as much as possible, obtained a position on HMS Carcass. The ship was set on an expedition across the Arctic to find the fabled northwest passage to India. This was a very perilous mission, and was ultimately unsuccessful, with the ship forced to turn back. However, along the way, an eager 15-year-old Nelson decided to pursue a polar bear across the ice. Young, intrepid and fearless, thanks to a sudden crack in the ice separating the beast from Nelson, the headstrong boy was granted another last minute escape from likely death.

The eager young sailor saw his first action when he was stationed aboard Seahorse in the East Indies. It was only a brief exchange of volleys, but Nelson was gaining experience and watching carefully. He was a fast learner and had a quick mind for naval tactics, so when a case of malaria caused him to be discharged, it affected him badly. While recovering, Nelson faced another battle, but this time with depression. For someone so determined to make a name for themselves, coming so close to a death of relative obscurity was a difficult pill to swallow. However, his proud, optimistic spirit won through, and fuelled by patriotism and a renewed sense of determination, Nelson passed the lieutenant exam and set sail again, this time into the perilous heart of the American War of Independence.

Aged just 20, Nelson was given command of a frigate and experienced his first taste of command, attacking Spanish settlements in Nicaragua. The operation was a success, and Nelson was commended for his quick thinking and valiant



“Invasion by Napoleon’s forces still seemed a very real possibility, and Nelson was the hero who could prevent it”

LIFE IN NELSON'S NAVY

WORK & WARFARE

Sailors usually started their careers as boys, but during wartime the navy needed an additional 60,000 men for the fleet, and this could include those who had never gone to sea. The skilled work was carried out by about 20 per cent of the crew, while the rest dealt with heavy hauling.

FOOD & DRINK

Food on board naval ships was of varying quality, and the meat was salted and placed in barrels for preservation. Although much of the food was bland and dry, sailors received regular meals. They were entitled to a gallon of beer each day and drunkenness on board was a big problem in the navy.

DISCIPLINE & PUNISHMENT

Discipline on board ships was harsh, but it was equally harsh on land. The rules on a ship, known as the Articles of War, declared that men could be hung for mutiny, treason, desertion or sodomy. Lesser forms of punishment were starting, running the gauntlet and flogging.

HEALTH & HYGIENE

With men living in such cramped, damp conditions, disease was rampant, with 50 per cent of all Royal Navy deaths in 1810 attributed to it. Surgery was far from advanced, with amputations used for any injured limbs, and there are accounts of tubs filled with severed body parts during battles.

PAY & BENEFITS

Poverty forced many men to sea, and on top of their annual salary, the riches gained from capture of an enemy vessel were divided among the men based on rank. Captains enjoyed three-eighths of the reward, however, Nelson often complained about his lack of prize money as he was posted away from bountiful areas.

actions. However, this success did not last, as almost the entire British force was struck down with yellow fever. Nelson himself barely recovered with his life, and when he returned to sea in 1784, it was not to a life of daring battles and valiant successes. Instead Nelson's role was to enforce the Navigation Act. He made many enemies, and the loneliness of command saw him sink back into despair and depression. When he returned home, he found himself unpopular with his kinsmen, without any appointment, and unemployed for five long years.

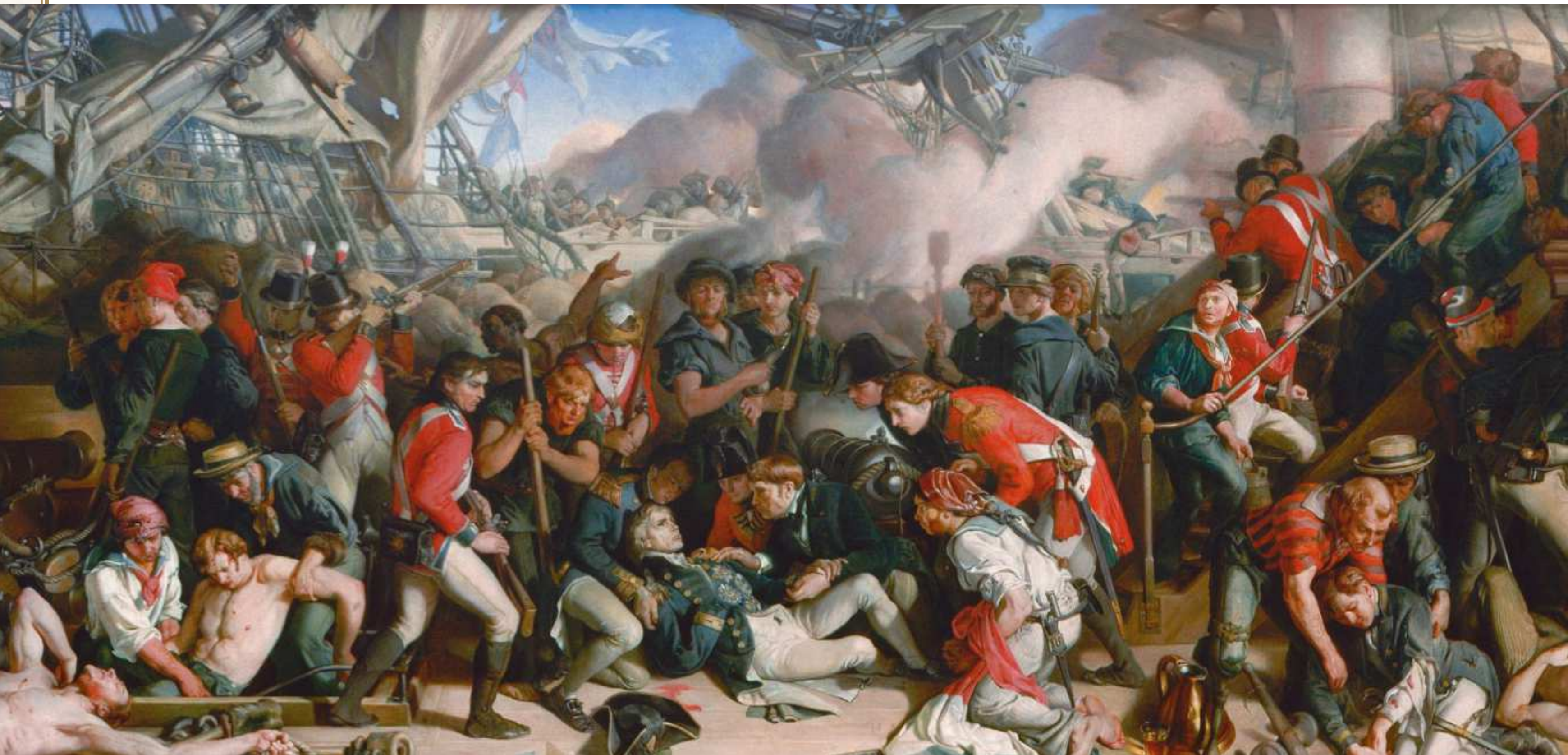
> "BRITAIN WAS WELL AWARE THAT THE PRIZE NAPOLEON DESIRED WAS INVASION OF THEIR OWN COUNTRY, AND ITS ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION"

Nelson was battered and bruised, but he was not defeated. His marriage to the widow Frances Nisbet, who had a five-year-old son, revitalised a man who was already far older than his 29 years. Meanwhile, overseas, events were happening that would affect the path his life would take forever. The people of France were rebelling, the king had been killed, the world was watching and finally, Nelson was given a ship: the 64-gun Agamemnon.

At last things in Nelson's life were looking up - he had a loving wife at home, a fast powerful ship under his command, and an able crew who listened and followed his orders. This dynamic life suited Nelson, and in it he began to flourish. The enthusiastic young man was still there, but another side was emerging, a capable commander and flashes of genius. It was during this period, while defending the port of Toulon, that Nelson first crossed swords with a 24-year-old French artillery officer by the name of Napoleon Bonaparte.

It was during this period of revolution, unrest and war that Nelson achieved some of his lesser known but equally notable victories against the Spanish at Cape Vincent in 1797 and at the Battle of Copenhagen. The bold commander was beginning to carve a name for himself. His men adored him because not only was he extremely capable, but he was also daring - a trait that cost him the sight in his right eye. In the British Navy Nelson was something of a rebel, ignoring orders to withdraw. In one instance during the Battle of Copenhagen, he lifted his telescope to his blind eye, pretending not to see the command to withdraw. Nelson's force of will and bullish British spirit earned him victory after victory, and although he was admired greatly as a leader, some fragment of the young man seeking affirmation and glory remained. Depression and self-doubt were demons that Nelson was doomed to fight until his final day, foes that all his naval victories and commendations could not vanquish.

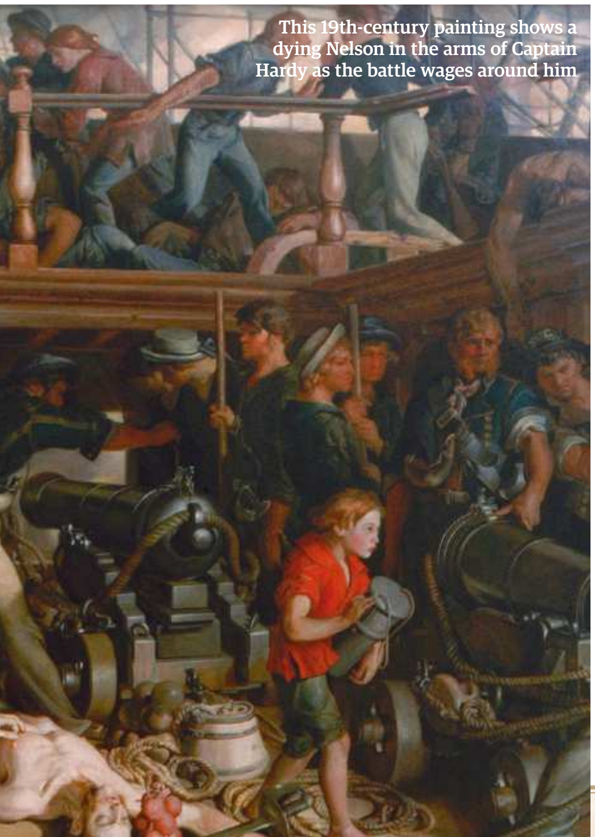
Although a peace treaty had been signed with France in 1802, just a year later war broke out once again. Nelson was appointed commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean fleet and hoisted his flag on the ship that would be forever linked with his name, HMS Victory. His mission was to blockade Toulon to prevent French ships there meeting up with those in the Atlantic and also Spanish ships in Cadiz and Cartagena. Britain was well aware that the prize Napoleon desired most of all was invasion of their own country, and its ultimate destruction. With the



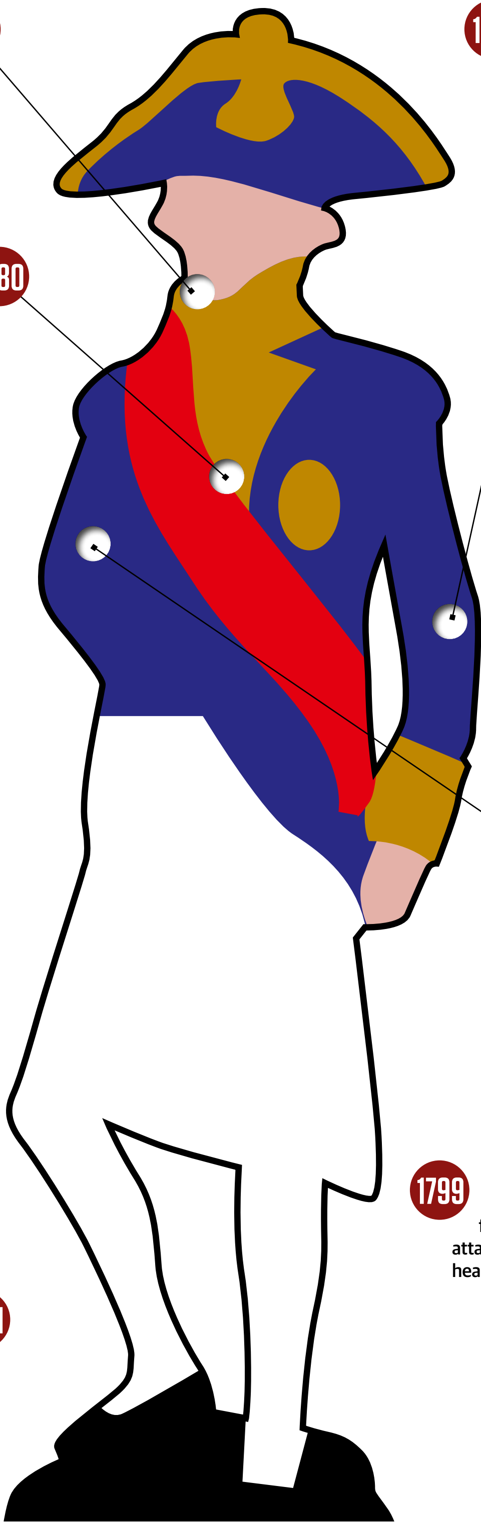
NELSON'S ILLNESSES AND INJURIES

Nelson's tendency to put himself in the heart of battle led to him suffering an abundance of ailments throughout his seafaring career

Nelson's easily recognisable medals made him a high-value target for French sharpshooters at Trafalgar



This 19th-century painting shows a dying Nelson in the arms of Captain Hardy as the battle wages around him



1771 When Nelson's naval career began, so did his ongoing battle with a sailor's worst nightmare – chronic seasickness. Nelson suffered with the ailment for the rest of his life.

1776 Nelson suffered his first bout of what would be a reoccurring sickness – malaria. This first attack almost took his life, but also gave him a vision of a voice telling him that he would become a hero.

1780 In San Juan, Nelson suffered from a cornucopia of ailments – dysentery, yellow fever, chest pain and even poisoning from a toxic fruit.

1781 While in London, Nelson complained that his left arm and leg were causing him distress. The fingers on his left hand were also white, numb and swollen.

1782 Like many sailors at the time, Nelson and his crew suffered from scurvy, and this would become a repetitive sickness that the admiral would later work to eliminate on his ships.

1787 Upon returning from the West Indies, Nelson was struck down with a fever so severe that a keg of rum was prepared to preserve his body if he were to pass away.

1794 In Bastia, Nelson was almost killed by a huge amount of dirt from a heavy shot falling on him. Days later, he was hit by earth and rocks from an explosion and was blinded in his right eye.

1797 In the midst of battle, Nelson received a musket ball shot above his right elbow. It was declared that he was killed, but the ship's surgeon amputated his forearm. Half an hour later, he returned to battle.

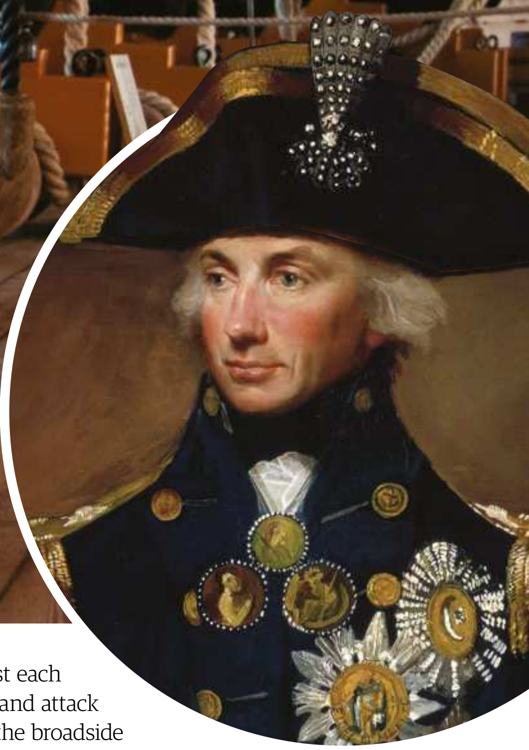
1798 Nelson was hit with a fragment of shot during battle. Again he declared himself dead, but continued on commanding the battle while bleeding profusely. Nelson suffered with blinding headaches for the remainder of his life.

1799 While in Palermo, Sicily, Nelson was reported to be suffering from what he believed to be heart attacks, accompanied by depression, headaches, sickness and indigestion.

1801 Again Nelson proclaimed his death was close when he suffered from severe heatstroke and vomiting, but he recovered remarkably quickly.

1805 During the Battle of Trafalgar, Nelson was struck in the shoulder and spine. Once more he stated: "I have but a short time to live." This time he was correct.

Today HMS Victory is on display at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard



combined force of these ships, that invasion was a very real possibility. If united, this single invincible fleet could take control of the Channel, enabling the French emperor to ravage Britain and leave it in tatters. It was up to Nelson and his men to stop that happening.

The French Admiral Pierre Villeneuve was a man under a lot of pressure. It was under his command that the combined fleet was to sail, and it was up to him to ensure that happened. Although Nelson and his fleet lurked nearby, Villeneuve managed to sneak out of Toulon under cover of bad weather. Upon realising the admiral had moved, Nelson set off in pursuit. The French reunited with some of their ships, but they failed to take control of the Channel so fled south to Cadiz with their fleet.

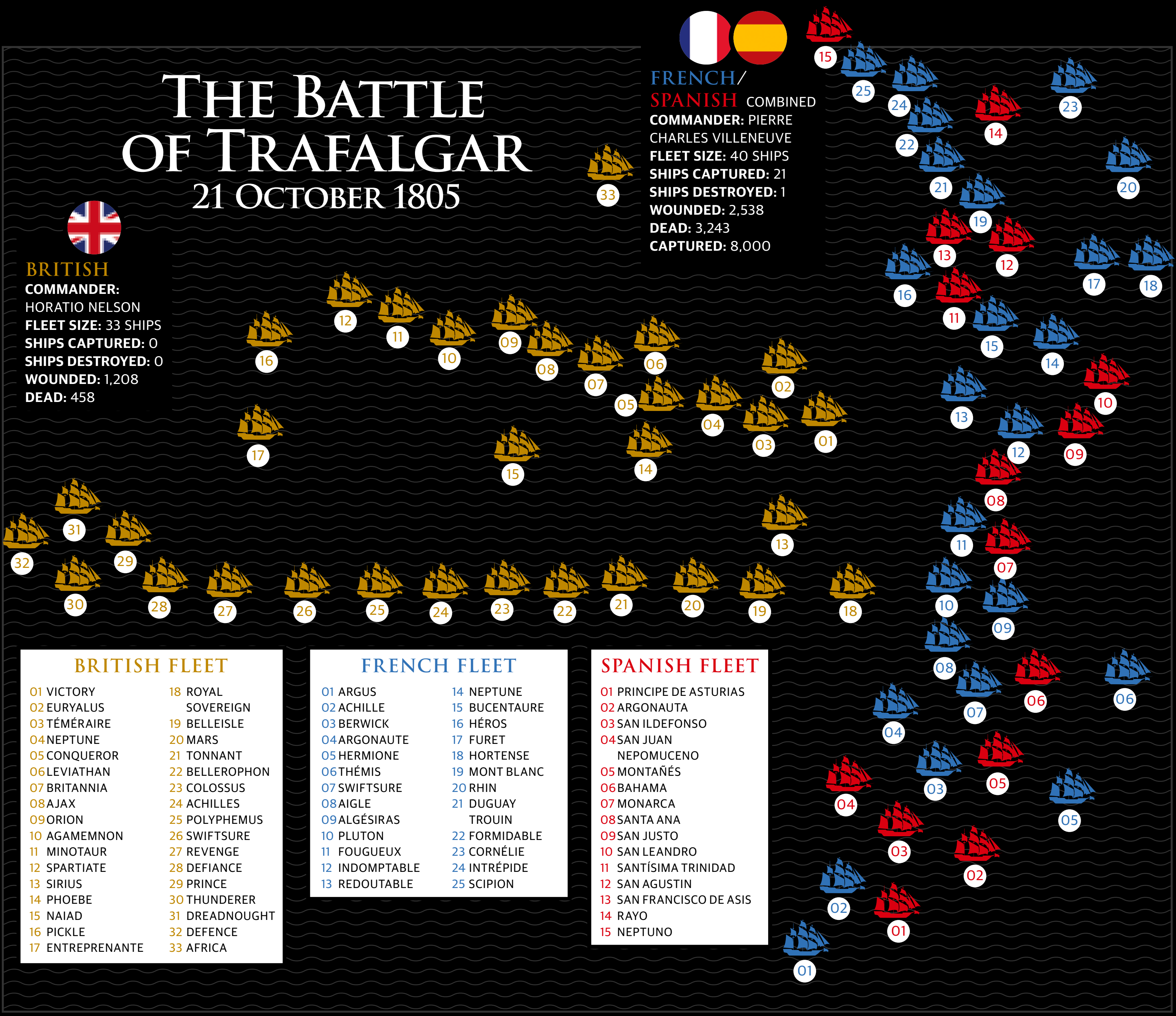
Napoleon was not pleased with Villeneuve's delay and already had plans to replace him. It was a final accusation of cowardice that forced Villeneuve to leave the harbour, and as far as he knew, there was no British force nearby that could hope to best him. Unfortunately for Villeneuve, he was wrong.

When Villeneuve first made for Cadiz, Nelson had returned home, and for 25 days he had perfected his strategy. Napoleon had refocused his efforts on his Grande Armée in Austria, but in England, invasion by sea still seemed a very real possibility, and Nelson was the hero who could prevent it. On 15 September 1805, Nelson set sail on Victory again, and was very careful to keep his main fleet well out to sea. Villeneuve had no idea that what he was running into was a strategy designed to stop him for good, and a man who still had something to prove.

As the silhouettes of the combined fleet appeared against the sunrise over Cape Trafalgar, the British finally began to move. They split into two divisions, one led by Nelson and the other by Collingwood. On board Victory, Nelson ordered his lieutenant to carry a message to the fleet: "England expects that every man will do his duty." Nelson was many things – curious, energetic, even reckless. His adventurous spirit and quest for personal pride had led him to travel to the furthest reaches of the world, but it had been his duty that kept him there. It was this sense of duty in the face of fear and danger that Nelson instilled in his men that day.

The men had every right to be afraid. Naval tactics at the time meant that almost every battle followed a set sequence – the ships would line up against each other and attack from the broadside cannons. This strategy was such an integral part of naval warfare at the time that it had inspired the name 'ship of the line' for the vessels that took part in it. But Nelson had other plans. He would deviate from the norm, and instead of facing down the line of Villeneuve's fleet in the ordinary fashion, he would attack them from the west, at right angles, in two squadrons. This put Nelson and his men at immense risk, as they were exposed to the fleet's powerful and devastating broadside cannons, but if they could cut their way through, they could slice the fleet in three and destroy it.

The British aligned themselves into two long lines, and like two arrows fired forward. They stormed towards the combined fleet, led by the flagships. The Franco-Spanish fleet were not expecting or prepared for such a tactic. The French ship Fougueux let off a broadside towards Collingwood's Royal Sovereign as he burst through the line, but it was too late. Sovereign raked Santa Ana, the Spanish flagship, with an attack



THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

21 OCTOBER 1805

BRITISH

COMMANDER: HORATIO NELSON
FLEET SIZE: 33 SHIPS
SHIPS CAPTURED: 0
SHIPS DESTROYED: 0
WOUNDED: 1,208
DEAD: 458

FRENCH/ SPANISH COMBINED

COMMANDER: PIERRE CHARLES VILLENEUVE
FLEET SIZE: 40 SHIPS
SHIPS CAPTURED: 21
SHIPS DESTROYED: 1
WOUNDED: 2,538
DEAD: 3,243
CAPTURED: 8,000

BRITISH FLEET

01 VICTORY
02 EURYALUS
03 TÉMÉRAIRE
04 NEPTUNE
05 CONQUEROR
06 LEVIATHAN
07 BRITANNIA
08 AJAX
09 ORION
10 AGAMEMNON
11 MINOTAUR
12 SPARTIATE
13 SIRIUS
14 PHOEBE
15 NAIAD
16 PICKLE
17 ENTREPRENANTE
18 ROYAL SOVEREIGN
19 BELLEISLE
20 MARS
21 TONNANT
22 BELLEROPHON
23 COLOSSUS
24 ACHILLES
25 POLYPHEMUS
26 SWIFTSURE
27 REVENGE
28 DEFIANCE
29 PRINCE
30 THUNDERER
31 DREADNOUGHT
32 DEFENCE
33 AFRICA

FRENCH FLEET

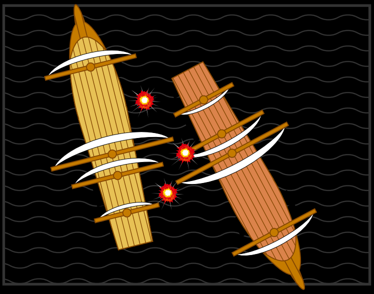
01 ARGUS
02 ACHILLE
03 BERWICK
04 ARGONAUTE
05 HERMIONE
06 THÉMIS
07 SWIFTSURE
08 AIGLE
09 ALGÉSIRAS
10 PLUTON
11 FOUGUEUX
12 INDOMPTABLE
13 REDOUTABLE
14 NEPTUNE
15 BUCENTAURE
16 HÉROS
17 FURET
18 HORTENSE
19 MONT BLANC
20 RHIN
21 DUGUAY TROUIN
22 FORMIDABLE
23 CORNÉLIE
24 INTRÉPIDE
25 SCIPION

SPANISH FLEET

01 PRINCIPE DE ASTURIAS
02 ARGONAUTA
03 SAN ILDEFONSO
04 SAN JUAN NEPOMUCENO
05 MONTAÑÉS
06 BAHAMA
07 MONARCA
08 SANTA ANA
09 SAN JUSTO
10 SAN LEANDRO
11 SANTÍSIMA TRINIDAD
12 SAN AGUSTIN
13 SAN FRANCISCO DE ASIS
14 RAYO
15 NEPTUNO

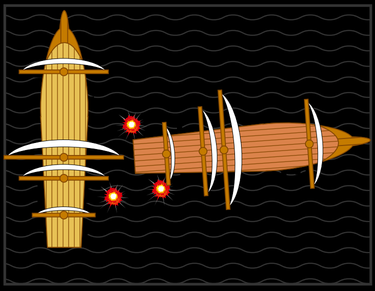
NELSON'S TACTICS

Battle at sea usually followed defined tactics, but Nelson deviated, risked everything and claimed the most decisive victory of the war



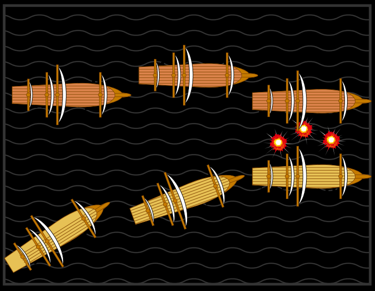
BROADSIDE

Because it was near impossible for ships to fire over the bow or stern, all the guns were positioned along the side of the ship. Because of this, it was the captain's aim to face the side of their ships against the enemy's side and then unleash the cannons in an attack. This technique was known as a broadside.



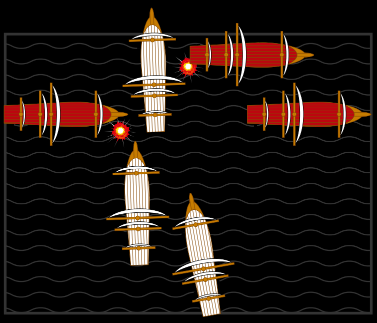
RAKING

A broadside attack was powerful, but it exposed the ship to the enemy ship's fire. It was safer for the vessel to bring its broadside to the bow or stern of the enemy vessel. This meant the ship was able to fire through the entire length of the ship, while the enemy was unable to return fire. This was called 'raking'.



TRADITIONAL FORMATION

Because the main aim of battles was to bring your ships broadside against the enemy's in order to unleash devastating firepower, ships would be aligned to unleash a torrent of attacks against each other. Often this resulted in two lines of ships sailing parallel and exchanging broadside over and over again.



THE NELSON TOUCH

During the battle of Trafalgar, Nelson made the risky decision to abandon the traditional tactic and instead he attacked the fleet at right angles. His ships underwent a torrent of attacks as they approached, but when they broke through the line, they raked the enemy ships and knocked them out one by one.

NELSON'S LEGACY

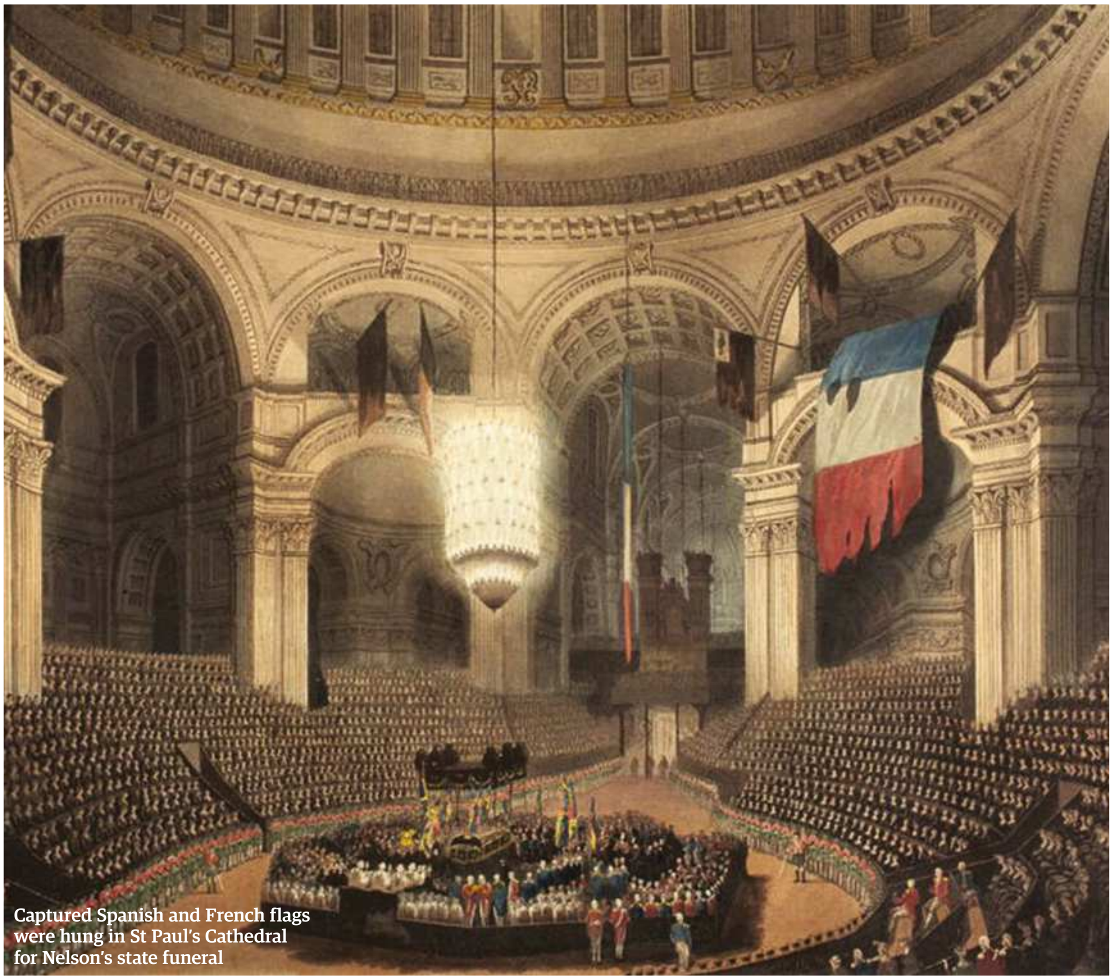
We speak to Roger Knight, who in 2000 changed his career from deputy director of the National Maritime Museum to that of teacher and author. His biggest book is the award-winning *The Pursuit Of Victory: The Life And Achievement Of Horatio Nelson* (2005). This biography was translated into French in 2015, the first time that this has happened since the 19th century. In September 2016, he published a study guide on Nelson in the Connell Guides series.

HOW INFLUENTIAL IS NELSON AND HIS LEGACY TODAY?

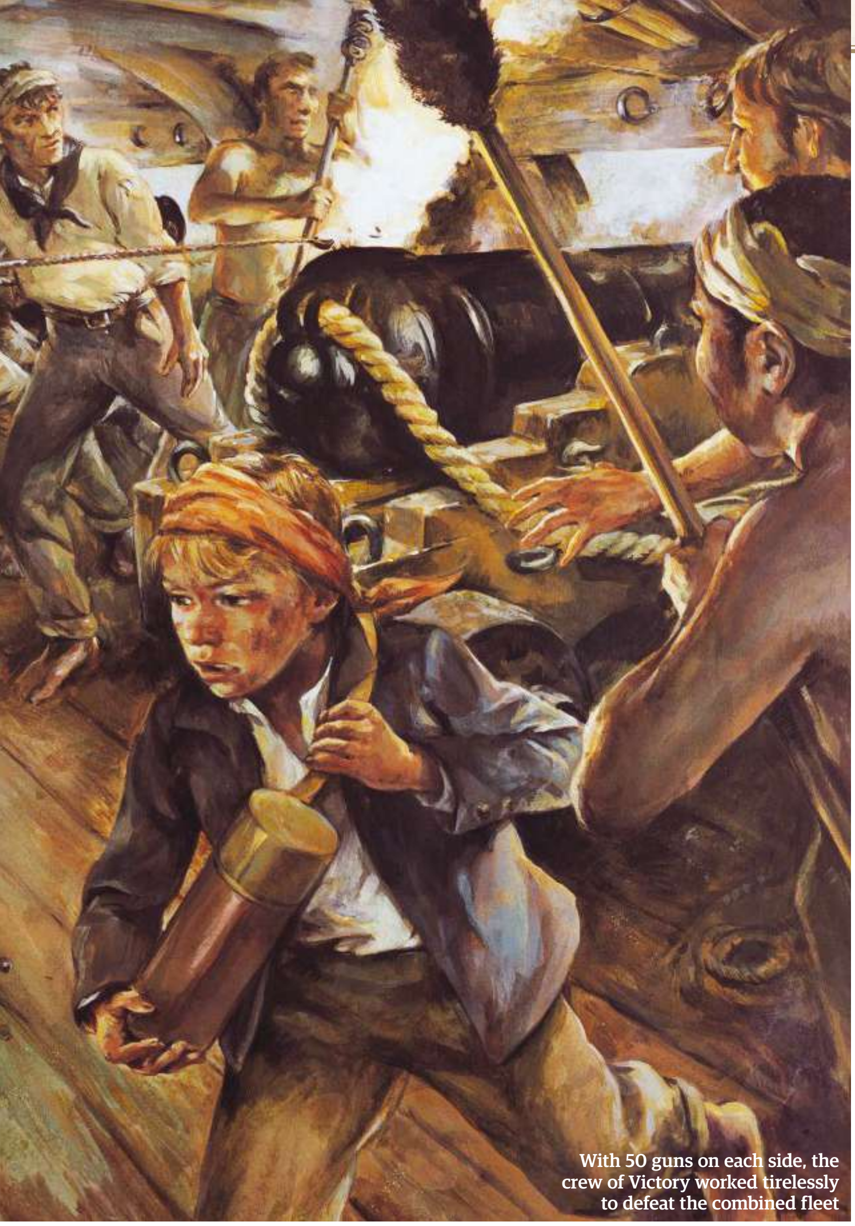
The legacy of Nelson has had a chequered history, for the straitlaced mid-Victorians did not approve of his relationship with Emma Hamilton and he was quietly dropped as a national hero. However, when the German naval threat emerged at the end of the 19th century, his heroic attributes were resurrected by those who wanted more warships to be built, and he came back into fashion.

The memory of his clear-cut victories led the British public to expect the Royal Navy to overwhelm the Germans in World War I - after the battle of Jutland in 1916, they were to be disappointed. However, the memory of his character and victories re-emerged as morale-raising propaganda during World War II. In the 21st century, the Royal Navy no longer has a worldwide role or an empire to defend and is a fraction of its mid-20th-century size. Yet Nelson's influence remains, and he is still in the first rank of national heroes. Navies around the world still study his leadership and management methods, when, most unusually for the time, he trusted and delegated responsibility downwards. One change that has taken place is that historians know much more about the officers, seamen and ships of the Georgian sailing navy, and studies of Nelson take the role of many other people and historical factors into account when writing about his victories.

Perhaps the most difficult strand of Nelson's legacy to analyse is the way in which he is still seen as the person who led the national resistance against the might of Napoleonic France. How much does his memory affect our complex relations with the continent of Europe?



Captured Spanish and French flags were hung in St Paul's Cathedral for Nelson's state funeral



With 50 guns on each side, the crew of Victory worked tirelessly to defeat the combined fleet

Nelson's Column, in the heart of London, is a permanent reminder of the admiral's sacrifice

so devastating it disabled 14 guns and 400 crew members. Victory meanwhile was leading the charge towards the two ships Redoubtable and Bucentaure. With the fleet so crowded together, Victory was forced to ram the ship and fire off broadsides at point-blank range.

The situation was so dangerous that many had urged Nelson to conduct the battle from a safe distance, or at least remove the stars of honour that were gleaming on his coat. Nelson refused. He had come close to death so many times before, but he was convinced that he would meet his end at Trafalgar. He had already said farewell to his closest friends and family, and if he was going to die, he was going to go out in the heat of battle, with his medals on his chest.

French sailors in the rigging of Redoubtable were already picking off men exposed on Victory's deck. Minutes before Nelson himself was shot, a man standing beside him was blown in half by a cannon ball, but Nelson did not move. Whether it was for pride, bravado or courage, Nelson remained on the deck of his ship. Shortly after 1pm, a musket shot hit Nelson, throwing him to the deck floor and shattering his spine. Still calling out instructions to his crew, he was carried below and examined by a surgeon, who confirmed death was imminent.

Despite his injuries and suffering immense pain, Nelson constantly asked for updates on the battle. Before he died, he was informed that the British fleet had taken 15 enemy ships. Nelson's dangerous tactic had worked; he knew he had won. As he drew his last breath, his beloved flag captain Hardy kissed his forehead and Nelson uttered his final words: "Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty." Nelson had never desired a long, comfortable life, he was a master of the seas and a seeker of adventure. As he left this world with the news of his greatest victory ringing in his ears, he departed it, finally, with pride.

Nelson's fatal injury caused him to miss the climax of the battle, where three British ships battered the French flagship Bucentaure into submission, and Villeneuve was forced to surrender. British ships were tearing holes into the combined fleet, at great loss of life. The French ship Achille refused to surrender, and was blown up with everyone on board. By the end of the battle, the British had suffered 1,666 casualties, while the combined fleet's casualties numbered near 14,000. France and Spain lost approximately 21 ships in the battle, while Britain lost none. Napoleon's plans to invade were well and truly thwarted.

The victory at Trafalgar had cemented British dominance of the sea, a mastery that would go unchallenged for ten more years of war, and more than 100 years of worldwide naval domination. However, this victory was completely overshadowed in England by the news of Nelson's death. He had been the nation's hero before he departed, and when his body was returned, he became their martyr. Nelson's body was preserved for the journey back in a cask of rum, as the admiral had requested a land burial. He was honoured with a magnificent state funeral at St Paul's Cathedral, and his popularity soared. His image was carved into countless statues and monuments, streets were named after him, and his flagship was painstakingly preserved, surviving today as the oldest naval ship still in commission.

Nelson's rise from a small, sickly child to one of the greatest and most beloved war heroes in British history is unlikely to ever be repeated. He remains a key part of British identity, and his famous column resides at the heart of the capital. The man himself has an almost god-like status, a source of pride, duty and bravery. But he was also a man who was led by a desire to prove himself, who suffered with self-doubt for much of his life. Perhaps this is Nelson and Britain's greatest achievement – not a naval victory, but the willpower and bravery to sail against the winds of uncertainty and fear, and to overcome.

NAPOLEON'S REFORM AND THE NAPOLEONIC CODE

As first consul and emperor, Napoleon introduced sweeping reforms and the famous Napoleonic Code, shaping France to his own vision

Words **Catherine Curzon**

When Napoleon came to power, France was a country in turmoil. Split by revolution, riven by poverty and with a government that was losing control, it was ripe for reform. Napoleon was sure that he was the man to lead the charge.

Napoleon's first reforms were to government itself. The coup of 18 Brumaire abolished the ruling five-strong Directory government and put in its place a single first consul, who enjoyed responsibility for the leadership of the country. That man was Napoleon.

The new constitution put far more power in the hands of central government. Local government was required to follow strict guidelines from the centre, and to be answerable to centralised administration. With local areas governed by prefects and mayors appointed by Napoleon, the threads of local and central government were joined in an intricate web, with everybody ultimately answerable to the first consul.

Over the years of unrest, France's economy had gone into terminal decline and Napoleon immediately began to shore it up. The feudal taxation system was open to abuse and while some paid a fortune, others - often the richest - paid little or nothing. Napoleon's reforms abolished feudal practices and instead assessed taxation based on wealth, with no exemptions for the richest nor those in the clergy. In addition, conquered states were hit with heavy taxes, all of which went to swell the national coffers of France.

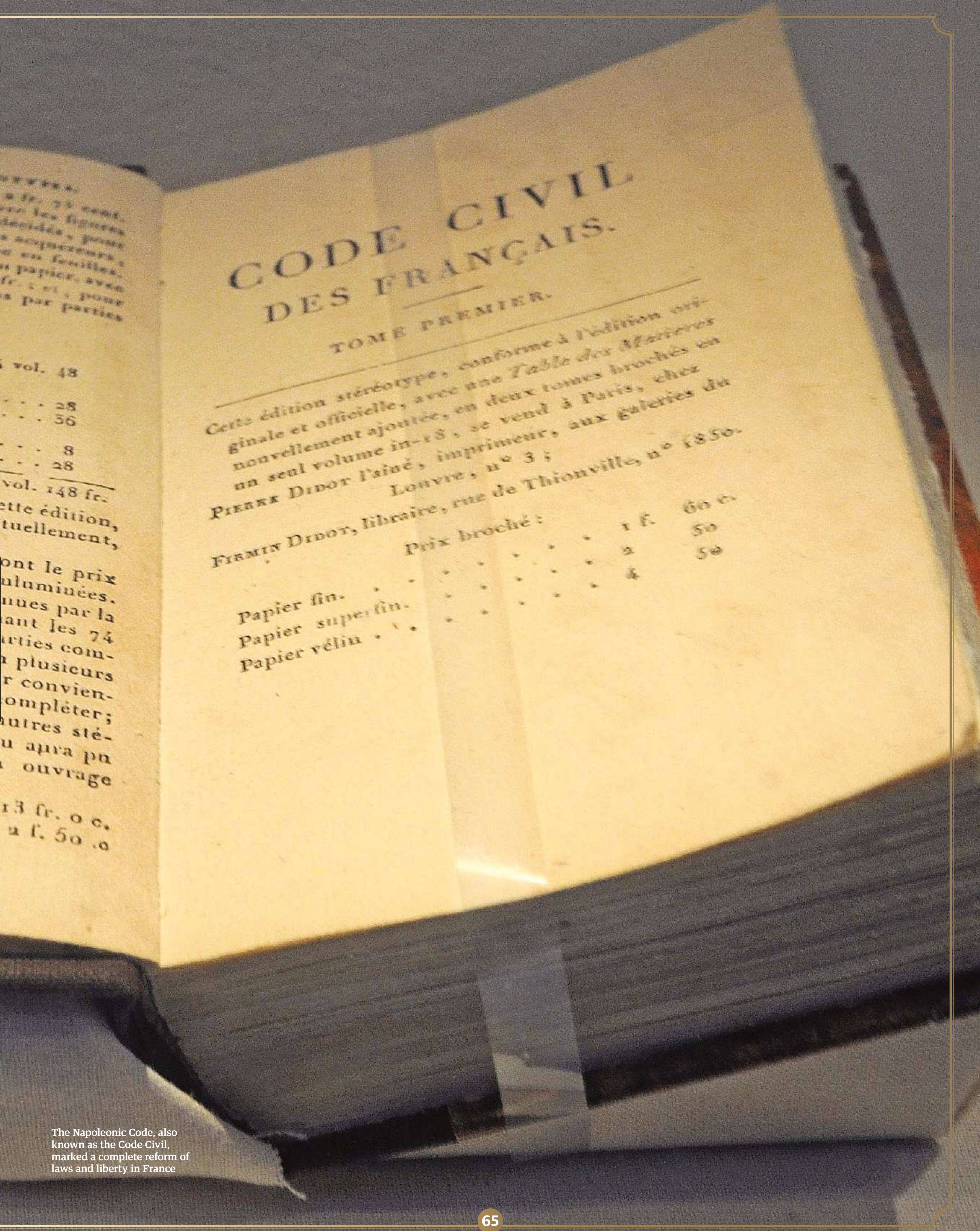
Once the country was recouping its wealth, he turned his attention on the banks and established the Banque de France, the country's first national bank. This was a joint enterprise between the state and private individuals. Among the shareholders was Napoleon himself and, just as he would install them as kings and generals, several members of his own family.

Loans from the bank transformed the industrial landscape of France, enabling new mills and factories to open, providing jobs to the unemployed. In rural areas the benefits were felt too, as state money was ploughed into agriculture to boost production. Famine, it seemed, was to swiftly become a thing of the past.

Napoleon had made his name as a soldier, so it's hardly surprising that the military became a special project. He poured a fortune into France's army to create a domineering force and though he retained the existing system of conscription, Napoleon established the École Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr in order to train future officers. Likewise, the National Convention's École Polytechnique was transformed into a training ground for scientists and soldiers. In a world where promotion through both the civil service and the military was often a matter of having the right surname and connections, now it was time for a man to earn his stripes by his skills.

At the basis of all of these reforms, Napoleon knew, was a good education. New state schools were opened for boys from ten to 16 and in this brave new world, the curriculum was standardised across the country. Napoleon had grown up during the Age of Enlightenment and intended for the schools to reflect this, so religious teaching was just one small part of a varied and disciplined menu. Girls, however, were not included in his grand plan. After all, Napoleon was sure that they would receive all the education they needed at home.

While instigating reforms at home, Napoleon hoped to expand France's reach into North America and for this reason, in 1800 he negotiated the Treaty of San Ildefonso, by which Spain handed Louisiana to France, who had held it for more than half of the 18th century. It was a rare misstep for Napoleon and fears of a possible French invasion of America came to a head in 1802. Faced with an uprising in Saint-Domingue at the same time as a



CODE CIVIL
DES FRANÇAIS.

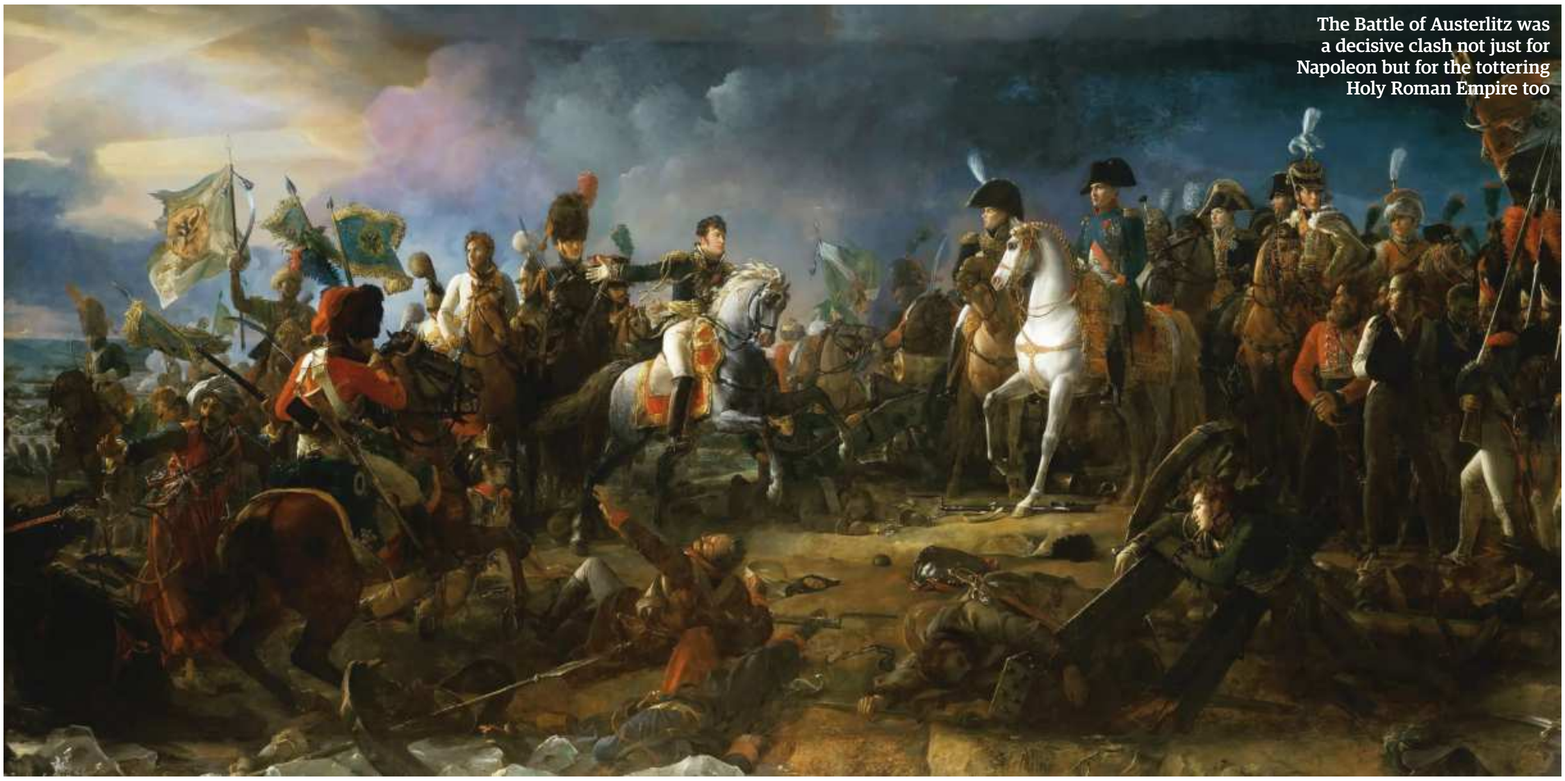
TOME PREMIER.

Cette édition stéréotype, conforme à l'édition originale et officielle, avec une Table des Matieres nouvellement ajoutée, en deux tomes brochés en un seul volume in-18, se vend à Paris, chez
PIERRE DIDOT l'aîné, imprimeur, aux galeries du Louvre, n° 3;
FIRMIN DIDOT, libraire, rue de Thionville, n° 1850.

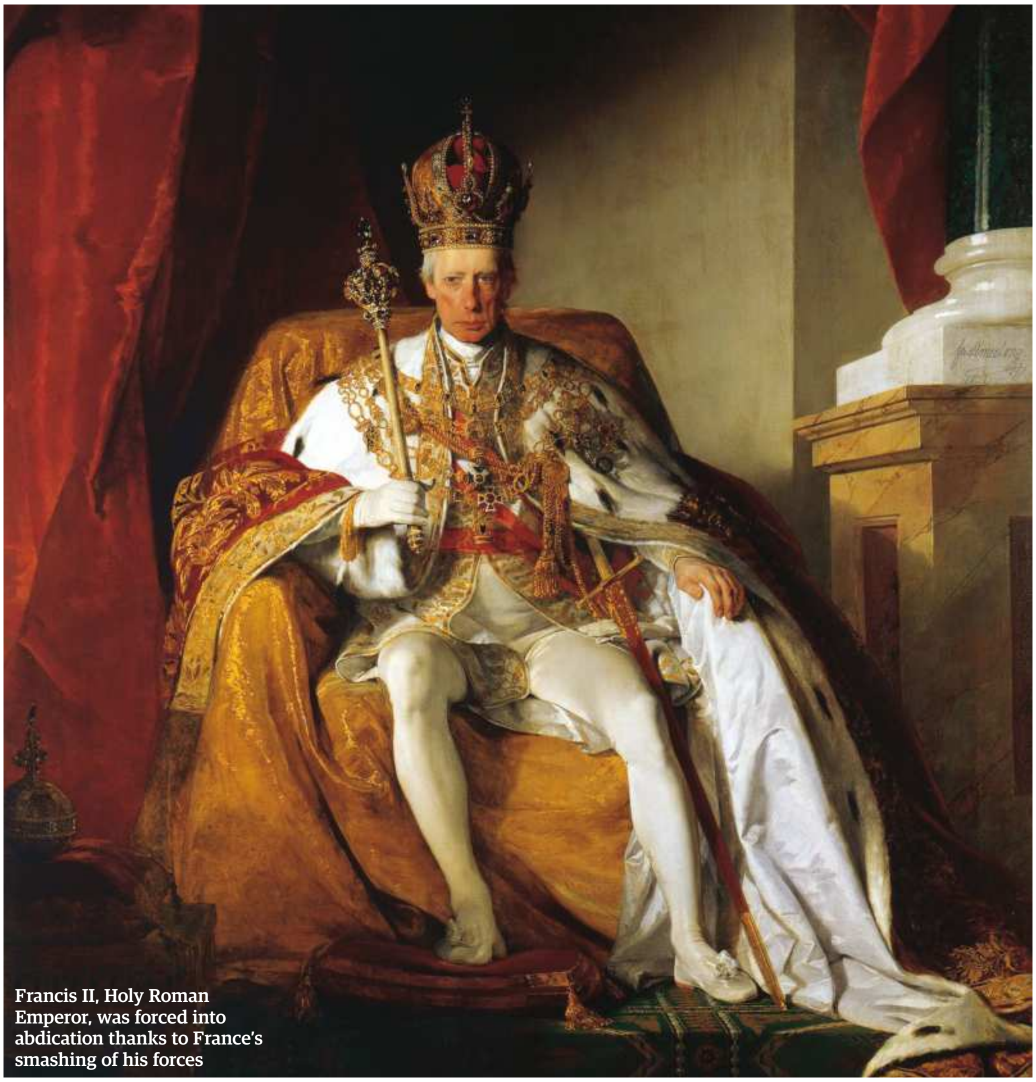
Prix broché :

Papier fin.	1 f.	60 c.
Papier superfin.	2	50
Papier vélin	4	50

The Napoleonic Code, also known as the Code Civil, marked a complete reform of laws and liberty in France



The Battle of Austerlitz was a decisive clash not just for Napoleon but for the tottering Holy Roman Empire too



Francis II, Holy Roman Emperor, was forced into abdication thanks to France's smashing of his forces

renewed war with Great Britain became a distinct possibility, France faltered and failed to bring the uprising under control. Needing cash to fund the military, Napoleon offered Louisiana for sale to the Americans. They accepted, completing the Louisiana Purchase for $15 million.

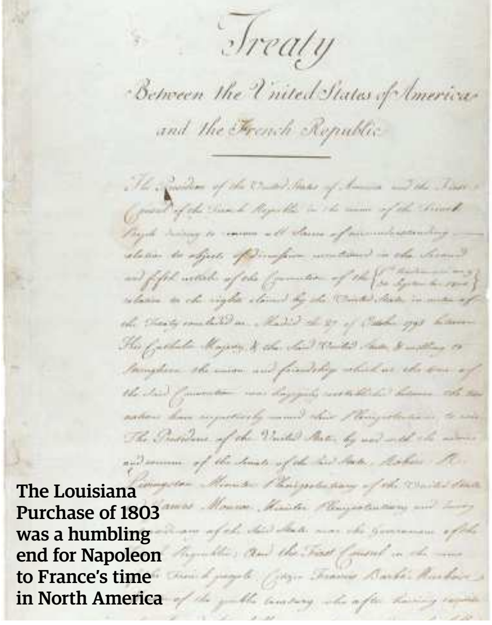
Although Napoleon's intervention in North America ended with a whimper, he was to have a much more significant impact closer to home. More than 1,000 years after Charlemagne's coronation established the Holy Roman Empire, Napoleon's territorial reforms brought it crashing down. After his victory at the Battle of Marengo in 1800, Napoleon presented Holy Roman Emperor Francis II with the Treaty of Lunéville in 1801, which annexed German territories on the west bank of the Rhine to France. It was agreed that any German rulers who were affected by this would be given land elsewhere in compensation.

Napoleon then set about reorganising the map of Germany, ostensibly to accommodate those disaffected rulers and large states absorbed by their smaller counterparts, with boundaries redrawn exactly as Napoleon wished.

As Napoleon redrew the map of Europe to his liking, things were stable at home and Napoleon's focus on reform was brought into sharp focus by the Napoleonic Code, which came into force on 21 March 1804, just nine months before Napoleon was crowned emperor. This code enshrined in law many of the reforms initially envisioned by the French Revolution, and personal liberty lay at its heart. At the same time, however, the protections for those in power were significant.

The existing legal system was chaotic and confusing and open to interpretation by those wishing to turn it to their advantage. The

The École Polytechnique became a school dedicated to forging the next generation of France's military



Treaty

Between the United States of America and the French Republic

The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 was a humbling end for Napoleon to France's time in North America

Napoleonic Code, however, sought to establish a clear system of rational law that applied to all. Inspired by Justinian's 6th-century collection of Roman laws, the Corpus Iuris Civilis, the Code was intended as a procedural manual for modern France and it was couched purely in legalistic terms, with no religious content. The Code stated that all men were equal, regardless of rank, privilege or title, while all religious control on civilian institutions was ended. For women, however, things weren't quite so rosy.

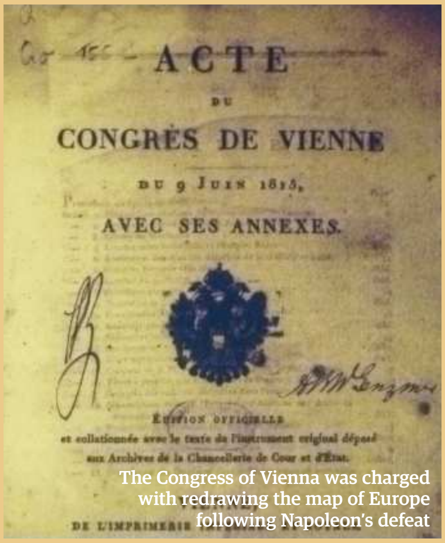
The code made women subordinate to their fathers or spouses and any family property was controlled by men who, in the case of divorce, could expect preferential treatment. Of course, none of this was particularly out of the ordinary in 19th century Europe.

Under the Code, laws could be applied only if they had gone through the proper judicial procedure. They couldn't be applied or introduced after the fact, nor could they be passed in secret. Judges were encouraged to interpret the laws accordingly and take responsibility for their decisions, rather than hide behind legalistic terms in order to steer a trial in their favoured direction. To ensure their impartiality these judges were nominated by the consul, rather than elected, which meant that they couldn't be voted out or leaned on to give a decision in favour of the more persuasive or wealthy party.

Napoleon's reform of the German states reached its climax at Austerlitz in 1805, when French troops routed the Austrians. This created the Confederation of the Rhine, which pulled in a number of German states and spanned the continent. Already fatally weakened, Austria faced further catastrophic territorial sanctions under the terms of the Treaty of Pressburg. With little Holy Roman Empire left, Francis abdicated on 6 August 1806, dissolving the Holy Roman Empire.

Much has been made of Napoleon's military might and his tactical, strategic mind on the battlefield. However, he complemented this with a political mind too and nowhere is this more clear than in the reforms he implemented during his years in power. Napoleon massaged and kneaded France into the country that he wanted it to be, while giving the populace a firm and solid legal system that they hadn't previously experienced. The Code, redrawn, modernised and organic, still exists in France today, as well as providing the influence for legal codes across the globe.

A UNIFIED GERMANY



ACTE

DU

CONGRÈS DE VIENNE

DU 9 JUIN 1815,

AVEC SES ANNEXES.

ÉDITION OFFICIELLE

et collationnée avec le texte de l'instrument original déposé aux Archives de la Chancellerie de Cour et d'État.

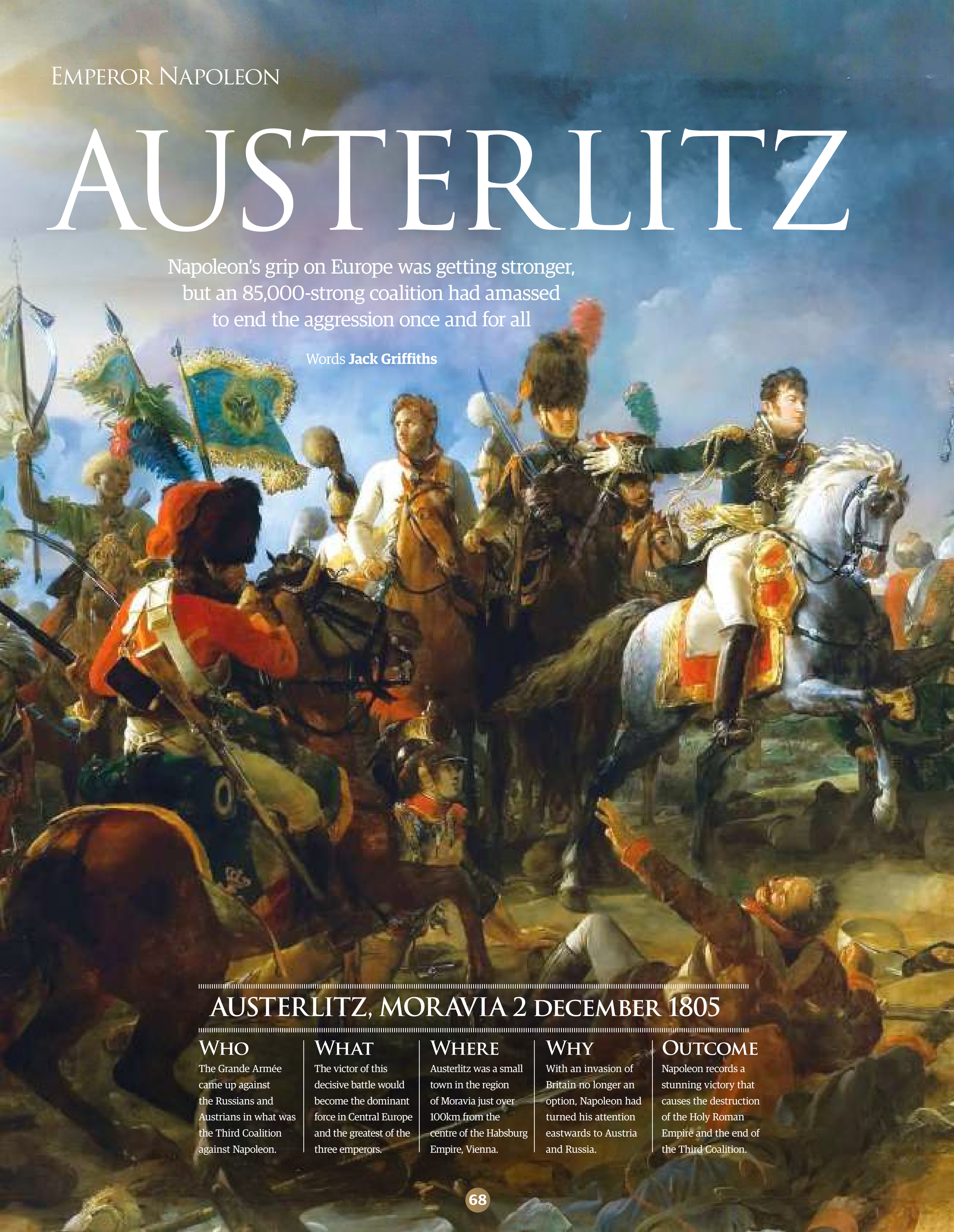
DE L'IMPRIMERIE

The Congress of Vienna was charged with redrawing the map of Europe following Napoleon's defeat

Napoleon smashed the once mighty Holy Roman Empire, sending its emperor into exile and creating the kingdom of Westphalia, which he entrusted to his brother, Jerome. Though Napoleon believed that this would put paid once and for all to the powerful German states, he could not have been more wrong. His humiliation of the Holy Roman Emperor and ruthless control of the states that joined the Confederation of the Rhine instead led the people and their rulers to pine for the Holy Roman Empire's yoke. German nationalism began to rise and after Napoleon's defeat, calls for a single German nation-state were louder than ever before.

The Congress of Vienna in 1815 fell short of rallying to these calls and instead established the German Confederation, in which the surviving member states of the former Holy Roman Empire joined together under the loose organisation of the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia. Though it would take many years and much diplomacy, sabre-rattling and grudging give and take, the road to a unified Germany was laid by this unlikely Confederation. Napoleon's belief that German forces could never pose a threat to French dominance again was to prove very wrong indeed.

> "UNDER THE CODE, LAWS COULD BE APPLIED ONLY IF THEY HAD GONE THROUGH THE PROPER JUDICIAL PROCEDURE, NOT PASSED IN SECRET"



AUSTERLITZ

Napoleon's grip on Europe was getting stronger, but an 85,000-strong coalition had amassed to end the aggression once and for all

Words **Jack Griffiths**

AUSTERLITZ, MORAVIA 2 DECEMBER 1805

WHO

The Grande Armée came up against the Russians and Austrians in what was the Third Coalition against Napoleon.

WHAT

The victor of this decisive battle would become the dominant force in Central Europe and the greatest of the three emperors.

WHERE

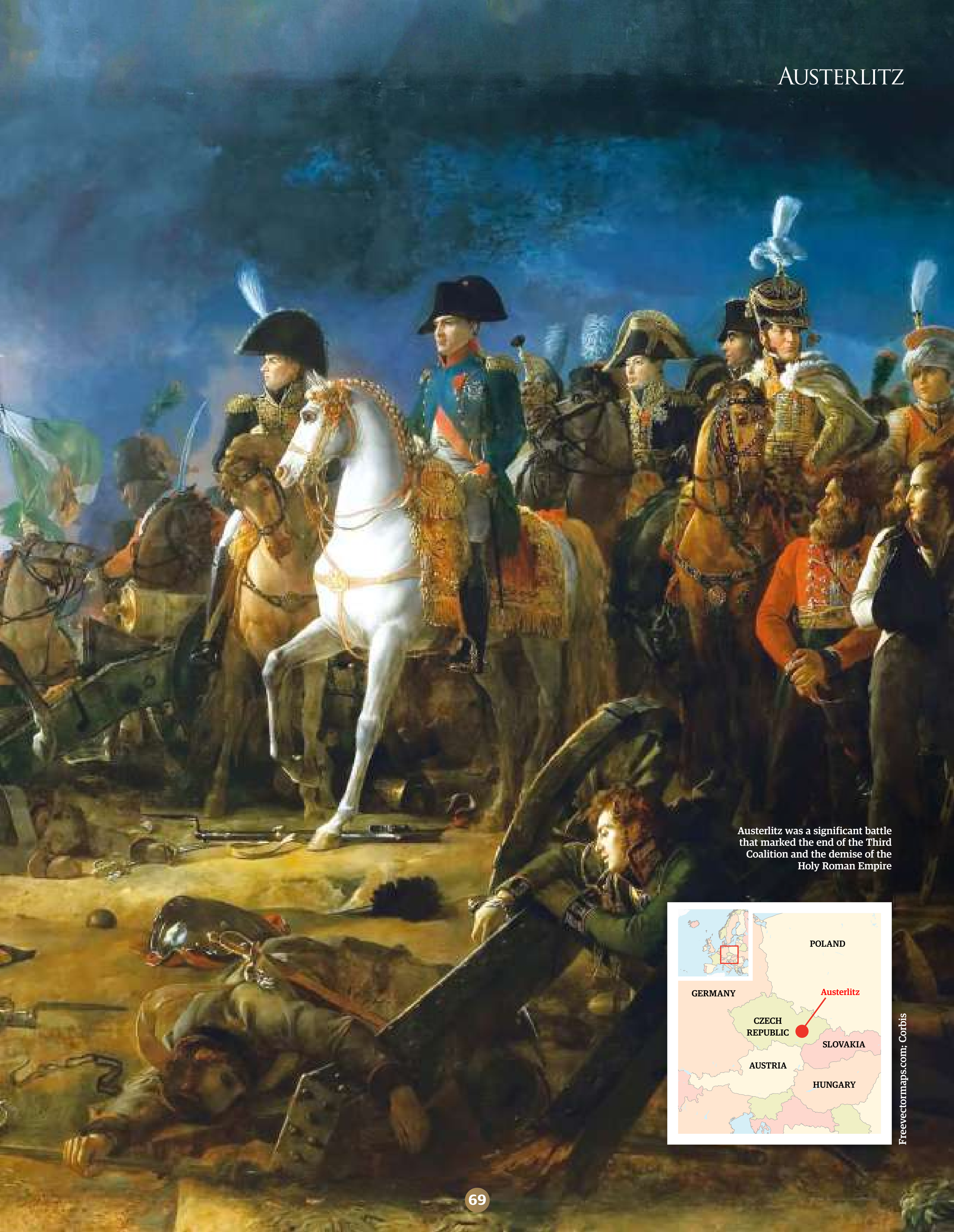
Austerlitz was a small town in the region of Moravia just over 100km from the centre of the Habsburg Empire, Vienna.

WHY

With an invasion of Britain no longer an option, Napoleon had turned his attention eastwards to Austria and Russia.

OUTCOME

Napoleon records a stunning victory that causes the destruction of the Holy Roman Empire and the end of the Third Coalition.



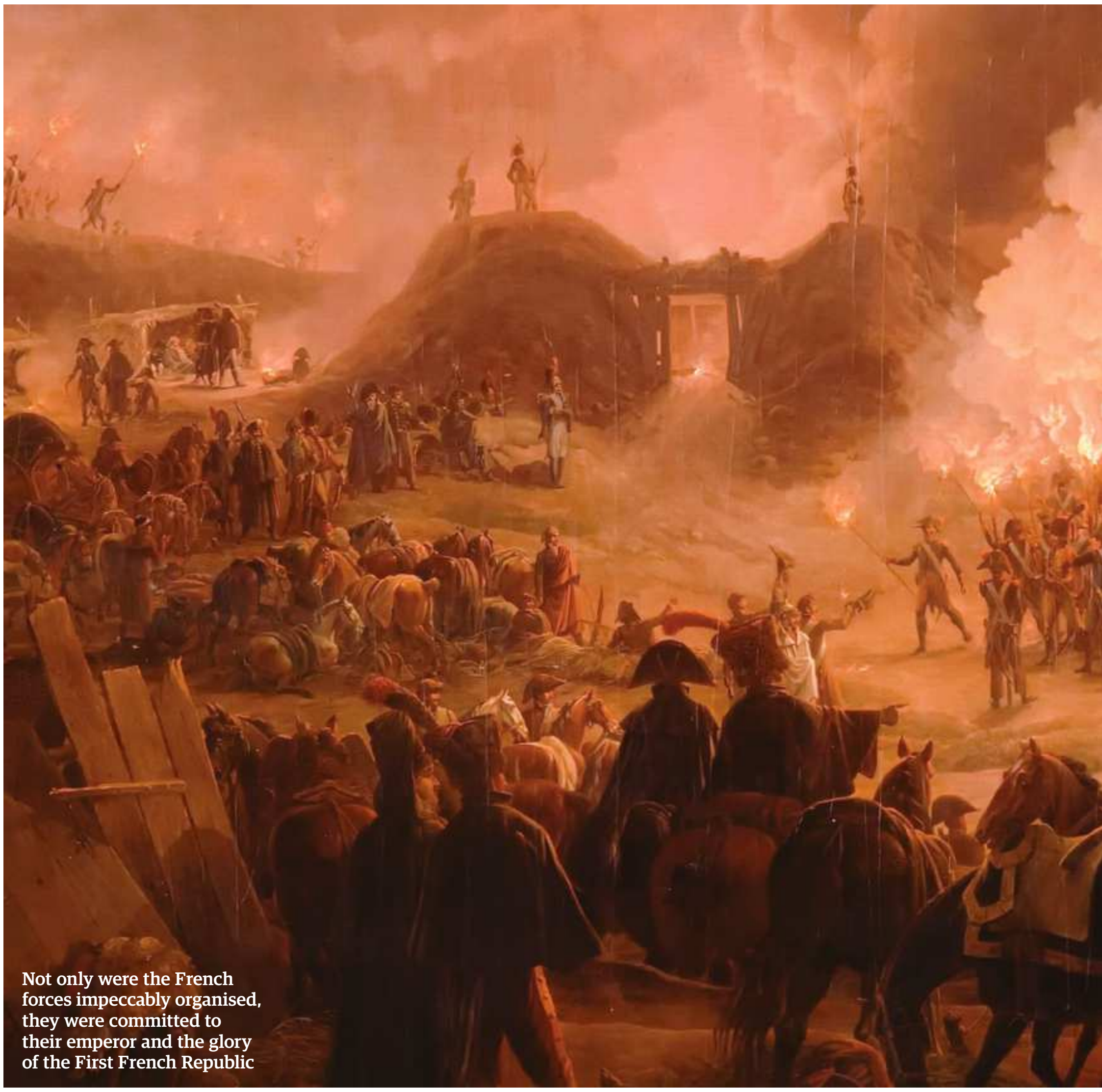
Austerlitz was a significant battle that marked the end of the Third Coalition and the demise of the Holy Roman Empire

POLAND
GERMANY
Austerlitz
CZECH REPUBLIC
SLOVAKIA
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY

Freevectormaps.com; Corbis

Ever since the turn of the 19th century, Western Europe had been a battleground. The Empires of old had been struggling against a reinvigorated First French Republic, and by 1803 a Third Coalition had been created to oppose Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. Originally, the French had wanted to invade Britain, but their loss to the Royal Navy at Trafalgar and the subsequent Treaty of Amiens meant Napoleon began to cast his eyes eastwards. Having already secured Spain as an ally, the two powers that stood in the way were the Habsburg Monarchy and what remained of an ailing Holy Roman Empire, plus the mighty Russian Empire. With latter two led by Francis II and Tsar Alexander respectively, the coming war was to be fought between three emperors.

Napoleon was a shrewd tactician, with the loyal and resolute Grande Armée at his disposal. His strategic nous was evident as soon as the war began in September 1805, as French troops scored victories against the Austrian army at Ulm and Munich. There was seemingly no stopping the Grande Armée, which had crossed the Rhine and emphatically swept across the continent. This was followed by the quick capture of Vienna in November of that year. Vienna was the capital and centre of the Habsburg Empire, and its swift occupation shocked the major powers. There had to be a response, and it came near the town of Austerlitz in the kingdom of Moravia. Would Napoleon be too strong, or would the old armies of the European kingdoms prove too strong?



Not only were the French forces impeccably organised, they were committed to their emperor and the glory of the First French Republic

The Battle Plan

The battle took place atop the Pratzen Heights. It was foggy on the morning of 1 December, as vast regiments from three armies amassed and awaited orders from above. The Russians stood in the winter cold, confident that the excellent artillery within its ranks would dismantle the French regiments. The Austrian cavalry, armed with their cold steel, were considered among the best mounted troops in the world. In total, the Allied coalition numbered 85,000 Russians and Austrians.

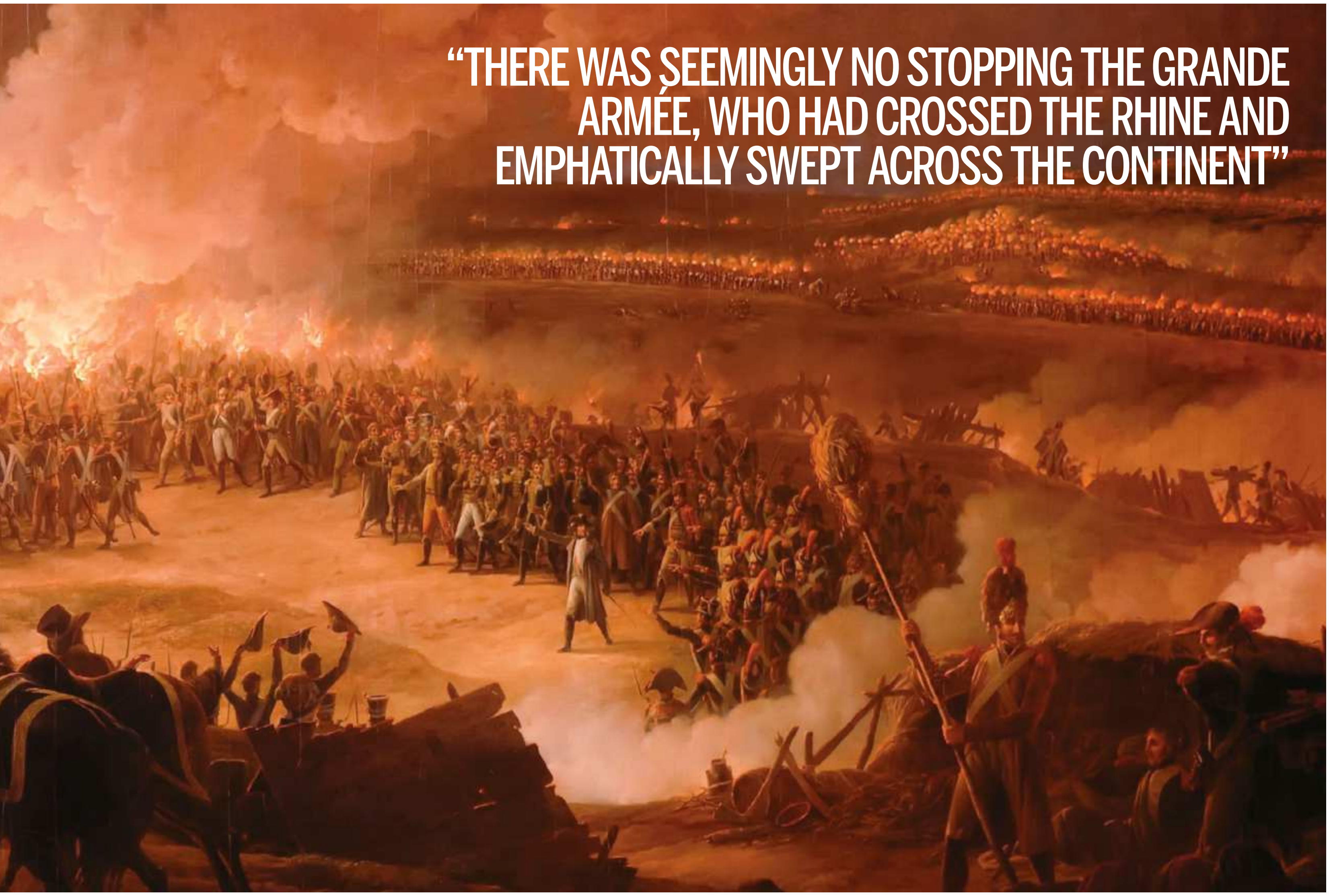
The generals were confident of stopping the French advance, and had outlined a plan devised by Austrian Chief of Staff General Weyrother. The strategy was designed to target the French right flank in an attempt to force them southwards and open up a path to retake Vienna. Russian General von Buxhoevden, who would be joined on the opposite side by General Bagration, would lead this advance. The centre would be held in reserve to keep the flanks steady. In charge of all the Allied operations was Field Marshal Mihhail Kutuzov, but he was soon brushed aside in favour of the direct leadership of Tsar Alexander I, who was hungry for an all-out assault to finally crush the formidable Grande Armée.

The Austrians and Kutuzov were willing to wait and force Napoleon's hand, but Alexander was far too reckless to even consider this approach. The Emperor would rather listen to his own desires than the Commander-in-Chief and besides, the Austrians were not be trusted after their capitulation in battle at Ulm a few months prior.

Napoleon, meanwhile, had a strategy of his own. After having failed to prevent the two Russian armies linking up, Austerlitz now became the location of the French Army's stand. The right side of his forces, which the coalition saw as a potential fragile point, was falsely weakened by the Emperor to draw the Allied troops in. If General Legrand's IV Corps could hold the Russians and Austrians here, the soft underbelly in the centre of the coalition was there for the taking. Napoleon, a self-made general, even rode with his troops into

Napoleon's artillery divisions favoured light cannons and howitzers that were part of the Gribeauval or Year XI artillery system

"NAPOLEON EVEN RODE WITH HIS TROOPS INTO THE HEAT OF BATTLE, A VERY DIFFERENT APPROACH OLD-STYLE AUSTRIAN AND RUSSIAN EMPERORS"



> “THERE WAS SEEMINGLY NO STOPPING THE GRANDE ARMÉE, WHO HAD CROSSED THE RHINE AND EMPHATICALLY SWEPT ACROSS THE CONTINENT”

the heat of battle - a very different approach to the old-style Austrian and Russian emperors. The French numbered 73,000, as they lacked the VIII Corps that remained posted in Vienna, the II Corps who were watching the Alps and the VI Corps stationed in Carinthia. Shrewdly, Napoleon sent his aide, Anne Jean Marie René Savary, to negotiate an armistice and deceive the Allies into thinking that the French lacked confidence. While this was happening, Napoleon's soldiers organised and equipped themselves.

Napoleon based his army on organisation and professionalism, and his popularity was at an all-time high with the French troops, who were at the peak of their morale, this battle being on the anniversary of the emperor's coronation. This boosted the Grande Armée, which was on the point of exhaustion after a long campaign through central Europe.

The Third Coalition was aware of the French fatigue, but had problems of its own. The Allied force was 70 per cent Russian and 30 per cent Austrian, so many of the orders given out had to be translated back and forth between two languages, which made it difficult to undertake a complex strategy. However, they were pinning their hopes on reinforcements from both Archduke Ferdinand Karl Joseph to the north-west and Archdukes Charles and John from Italy to the south. This was enhanced further by 4,000 Austrians and 12,000 Russians already on their way to the battlefield, and would arrive in the next few days. If the battle could be delayed just a bit, then the coalition's numbers would increase dramatically. However, this way of thinking was never on Alexander's mind; he would defeat Napoleon there and then.

THE BATTLE BEGINS

Overnight the weather had remained foggy, which hid the French deployment. Just before 7am on 2 December, the Allies spied what looked like a panicked retreat by the French from the Pratzen Heights. In line with their initial strategy, 40,000 Russian troops moved south towards Napoleon's right wing that had just hurried from the heights.

Over the ridge, 10,500 French lay in wait, and fighting began across the Goldbach stream near the village of Telnitz. The Goldbach would act as the dividing line between the opposing forces.

OPPOSING FORCES

LEADERS
Napoleon I, Claude Legrand, Louis Alexandre Berthier
REGIMENTS
Imperial Guard, I Corps, III Corps, IV Corps, V Corps, Heavy cavalry and dragoon reserves
ARTILLERY
139 guns
GAME CHANGERS
The Grande Armée was battle-hardened, organised and willing to die for the emperor on the anniversary of his coronation

LEADERS
Alexander I, Francis II, Mikhail Kutusov
REGIMENTS
Imperial Guard, 2x Advance Guard, First Column, Second Column, Third Column, Fourth Column (All Russian), 3rd Austrian Infantry Brigade, Fifth Column (Austrian)
ARTILLERY
278 guns
GAME CHANGERS
The power of the Russian artillery was vastly superior to anything the French could muster

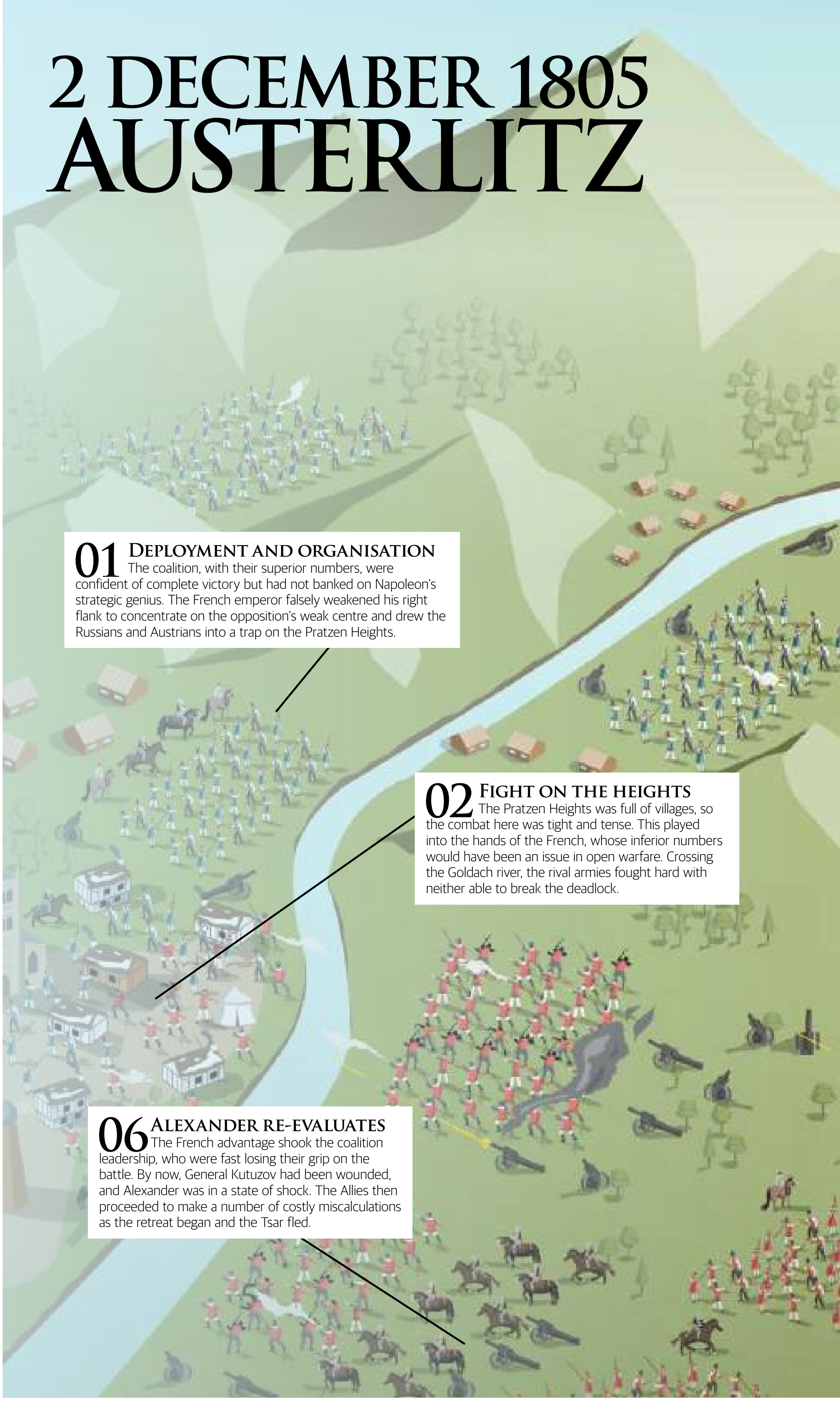
The Russians and Austrians held the ascendancy in the battle's initial exchanges, and initially their strategy was going to plan. But their progress was checked in the village, where the late arrival of the French III Corps had swung the pendulum back in Napoleon's favour.

Napoleon's original plan had been scuppered by the enemy not moving their entire force from the centre, but he had other ways of gaining the upper hand. Led by General Davout, 4,300 men had been summoned by Napoleon to march 110 kilometres (68 miles) from Vienna to bolster the French forces. In one of history's closest shaves, they managed to complete their march in 48 hours and arrive just in time to strengthen the right flank, which was buckling under the Allied onslaught. In the shadow of the old fortress at Sokolnitz, the occupation of the heights changed hands frequently, but eventually Davout's men managed to end the stalemate and turn the tide to smash through the Allied ranks. Despite a short rally from the Austrian O'Reilly light cavalry, the coalition troops began to flee. The battle had been turned on its head, and nearly all the Allied advances had been checked.

With the battle of the heights over, the conflict turned to the left and centre sides of the battlefield. An initial cavalry charge on the left flank saw horses from both sides slam into one another, while in the centre the Russian Imperial Guard launched into the French battalions as the coalition rallied. 3,000 grenadiers broke the first French line, and were only stopped after a timely artillery barrage. The imperial guard regrouped to allow their artillery to exact revenge and bombard the French, who had formed defensive squares on the battlefield. The coalition cavalry then struck the weakened squares and captured what would be their only trophy from Austerlitz, the French Fourth Line's Eagle.

Napoleon, seeing the fight for the centre ground becoming a losing battle, sent his own imperial guard into the fray, with emphatic results. Scattered after their initial success, the Russian Imperial Guard did not maintain their line, and were easily picked off by the French counter-attack, boosted by the I Corps. This hammer blow crumbed the Allied centre, and the battle for the left flank was still raging. The Allied formation was split into two, and lacked a core. The French Divisions could now outmanoeuvre the scattered Russians and Austrians and attack them from all sides.

As the battle raged into the afternoon, young French General Lannes went on the offensive to the north of the battle in an attempt to strike down the Austrian divisions led by General Bagration. He almost succeeded, but was foiled after a battery of Austrian artillery made a timely intervention. The Austrians were still pegged back, but were not cut off from the rest of their force as Lannes had hoped. As Tsar Alexander took stock and analysed what had happened, he realised that the coalition high command had been torn from the main army, and unable to direct the battle effectively. Napoleon had the upper hand.



2 DECEMBER 1805
AUSTERLITZ

01 Deployment and organisation

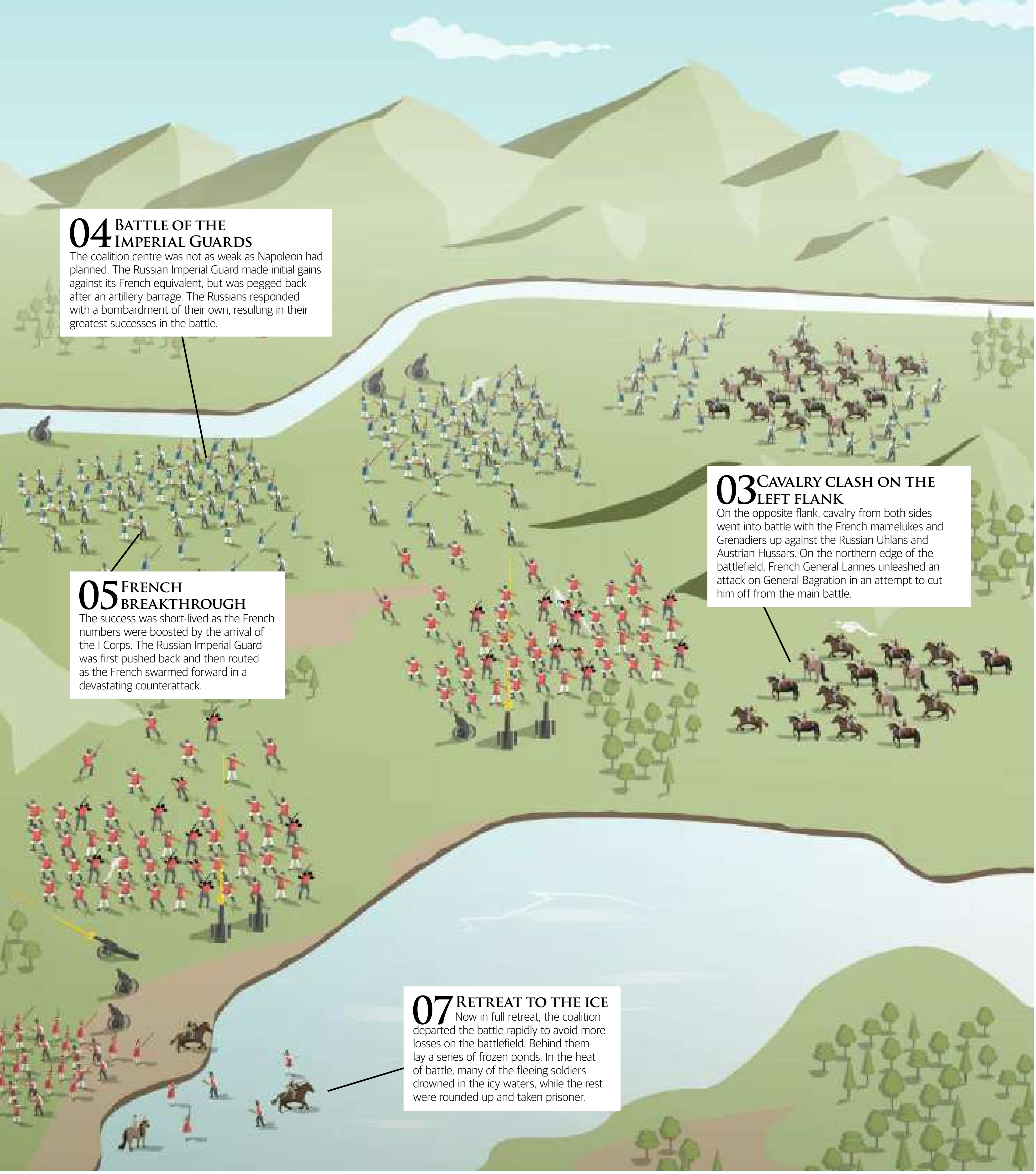
The coalition, with their superior numbers, were confident of complete victory but had not banked on Napoleon's strategic genius. The French emperor falsely weakened his right flank to concentrate on the opposition's weak centre and drew the Russians and Austrians into a trap on the Pratzen Heights.

02 Fight on the heights

The Pratzen Heights was full of villages, so the combat here was tight and tense. This played into the hands of the French, whose inferior numbers would have been an issue in open warfare. Crossing the Goldach river, the rival armies fought hard with neither able to break the deadlock.

06 Alexander re-evaluates

The French advantage shook the coalition leadership, who were fast losing their grip on the battle. By now, General Kutuzov had been wounded, and Alexander was in a state of shock. The Allies then proceeded to make a number of costly miscalculations as the retreat began and the Tsar fled.



04 Battle of the Imperial Guards

The coalition centre was not as weak as Napoleon had planned. The Russian Imperial Guard made initial gains against its French equivalent, but was pegged back after an artillery barrage. The Russians responded with a bombardment of their own, resulting in their greatest successes in the battle.

03 Cavalry clash on the left flank

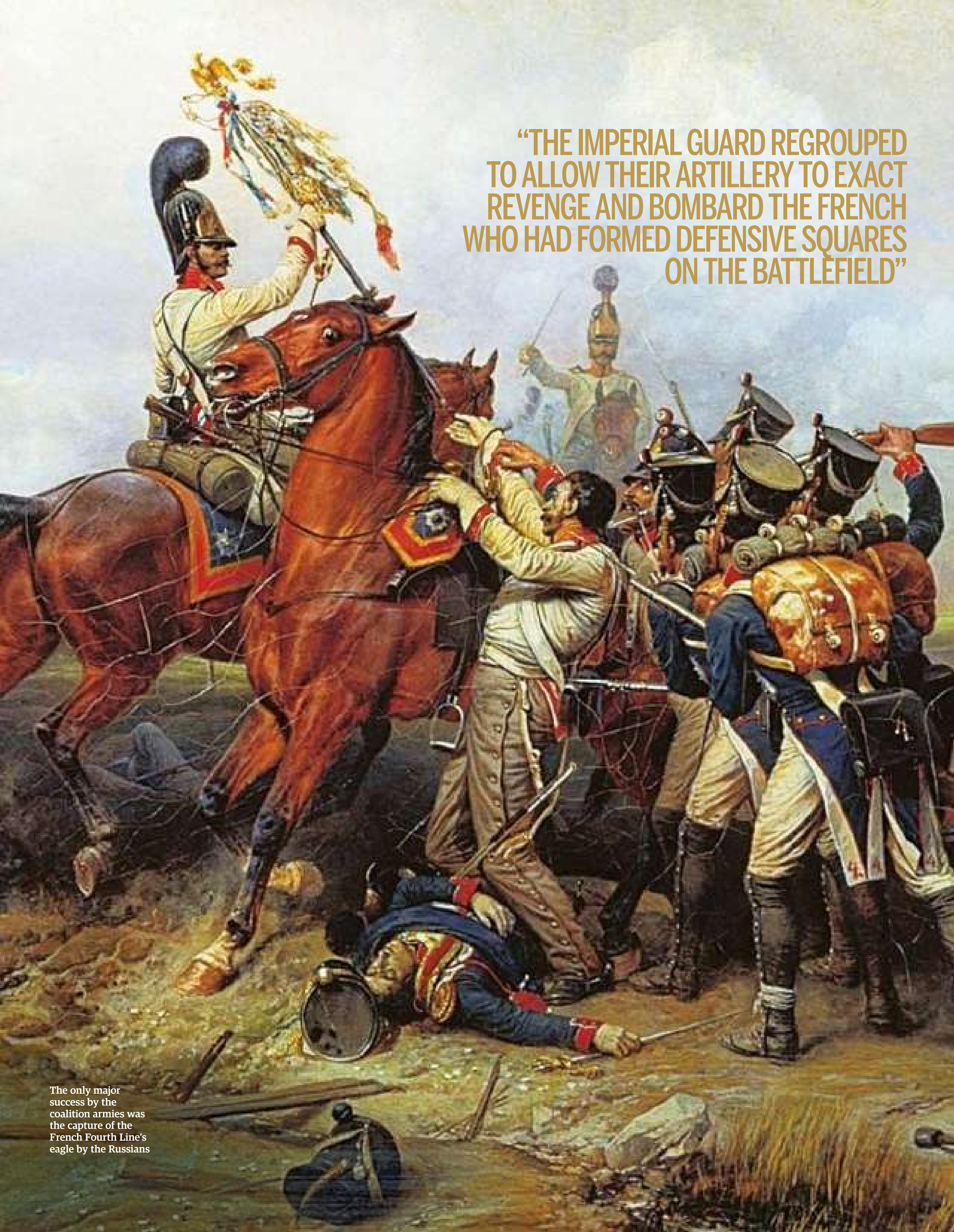
On the opposite flank, cavalry from both sides went into battle with the French mamelukes and Grenadiers up against the Russian Uhlans and Austrian Hussars. On the northern edge of the battlefield, French General Lannes unleashed an attack on General Bagration in an attempt to cut him off from the main battle.

05 French breakthrough

The success was short-lived as the French numbers were boosted by the arrival of the I Corps. The Russian Imperial Guard was first pushed back and then routed as the French swarmed forward in a devastating counterattack.

07 Retreat to the ice

Now in full retreat, the coalition departed the battle rapidly to avoid more losses on the battlefield. Behind them lay a series of frozen ponds. In the heat of battle, many of the fleeing soldiers drowned in the icy waters, while the rest were rounded up and taken prisoner.



The only major success by the coalition armies was the capture of the French Fourth Line's eagle by the Russians

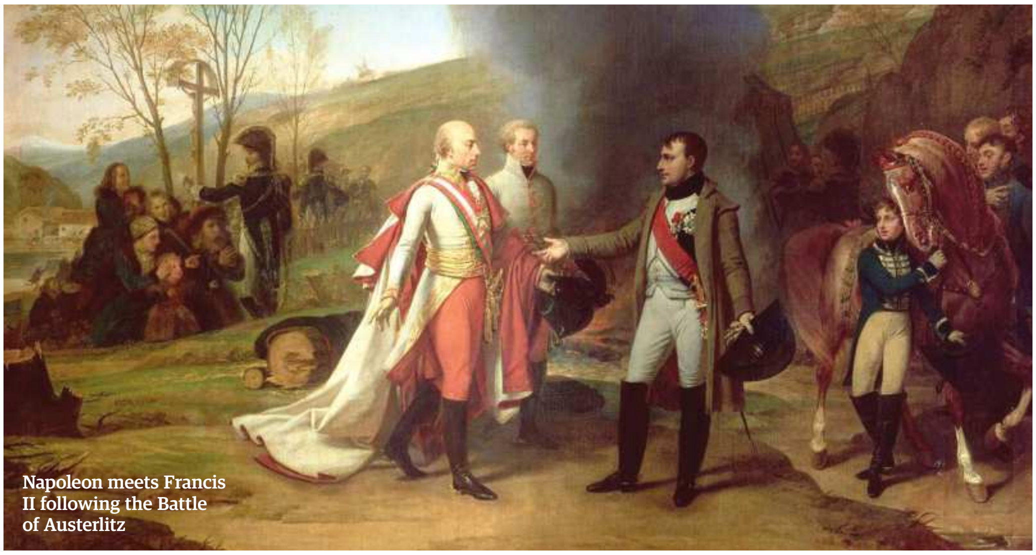
> “THE IMPERIAL GUARD REGROUPED TO ALLOW THEIR ARTILLERY TO EXACT REVENGE AND BOMBARD THE FRENCH WHO HAD FORMED DEFENSIVE SQUARES ON THE BATTLEFIELD”

RETURN TO THE HEIGHTS

Back on the right flank, ferocious man-to-man fighting meant the French had now occupied the heights, but were unable to press home their advantage as the coalition armies fought back bravely. Both sides were wielding primitive firearms, with the most popular being the .69 calibre smoothbore musket. This weapon was inaccurate and quite ineffective, with many shots not hitting the target sometimes resulting in friendly fire. This meant much of the battle saw fierce hand-to-hand fighting.

Using both bayonets and sabres, Austerlitz was a ferocious battle, with neither side holding back. The close quarters combat was backed up by artillery barrages from both sides. Although the Allies had many more guns at their disposal, the organisation of the French troops meant their shots were more effective and frequent. This lack of cohesion in the coalition also meant that the powerful Austrian cavalry could not be utilised effectively, and was often found too far to the rear to do any lasting damage to the French lines. In the latter stages of the battle, the Tsar saw that victory was becoming more and more unlikely, so fled the field. It was also at this time that Allied General Kutuzov received a wound and had to be treated in the safety of a reserve unit. The coalition was now leaderless, and unable to co-ordinate effective attacks. An unsupported Russian Uhlan attack on the north flank that suffered 400 casualties demonstrated this.

Behind the Russian and Austrian regiments lay a number of frozen ponds known as the Satschan Mere. As the French piled forward, the Allies had no option but to flee across the ice. Saddled with heavy artillery and the remaining horses, the winter lake could not hold the weight, and as the French drew near, many fell into the freezing water and became the victim of the sub-zero temperatures. The remainder of the troops were bombarded by artillery or taken prisoner as soon as they reached the lake's shores.


Napoleon meets Francis II following the Battle of Austerlitz

Contemporary accounts have claimed that the number of Allied deaths in the Satschan Mere were greatly exaggerated, but nonetheless, the coalition divisions were scattered and leaderless, and defeat was now almost inevitable. 11,000 Russians and 4,000 Austrians lay dead in the mud as a victorious Grande Armée mopped up the remaining coalition soldiers on the battlefield. 12,000 soldiers were captured, and the French helped themselves to 180 cannons from the Russian artillery. The weary French could now rest as the Russians retreated back to their homeland and the Austrians surrendered to their French enemy.

THE AFTERMATH

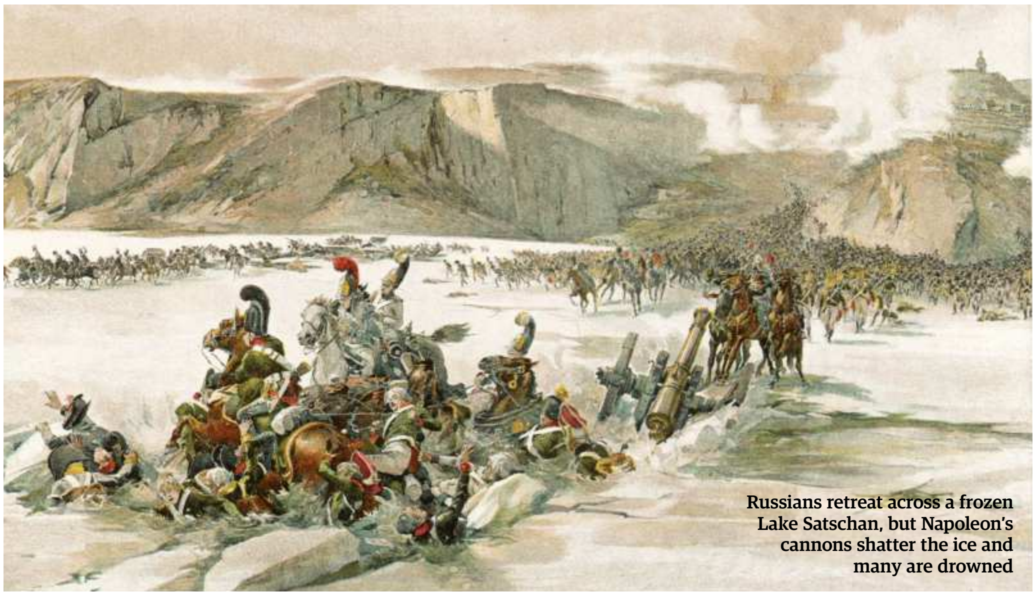
Napoleon may not have defeated his adversaries as comprehensively as he would have liked, but he out-thought and out-fought both the Austrians and Russians. His triumph was so great that many see the victory as when the Emperor began to lose touch with reality and began to concoct more ambitious ideas for his own Napoleonic Europe.

On the evening of 2 December, Johann I Joseph, Prince of Liechtenstein, rode into the French encampment to negotiate a peace agreement. The hierarchy of the Grande Armée agreed, and Napoleon and Francis met two days later. After extended discussions, the result was the fourth Peace of Pressburg. The treaty, signed on 26 December was a necessity for Austria, who had seen their lands taken and army in ruins, but the agreement greatly benefitted the First French Republic. France now had Trieste and Dalmatia under its rule, as well as a vast area east of the Rhine that bordered Bavarian and Prussian lands. Napoleon was keen to appease Prussia, so they did not enter a conflict with the French. As a result, he allowed his defeated foe free reign over Hanover.

The Austrians fared much worse than any other nation, and were forced to pay 40 million Francs in reparations. Most significantly, the Holy Roman Empire dissolved after 1,000 years as a kingdom. The victory of a republican army against a monarchical one was an important turning point in warfare.

In the Russian Army, aristocrats still held the top roles and order was maintained by regular beatings. This meant the officers were often poorly trained, especially in comparison to the Grande Armée, who were well drilled by Napoleon and could easily adapt to new strategies and tactics. There were even reports that Russian general Friedrich Wilhelm Buxhowden was drunk during the battle. With the destruction of the Third Coalition, the political and military structures and attitudes of old were essentially eradicated.

The picture of post-Austerlitz Europe was a bleak one for all, bar Napoleon. The Third Coalition was in ruins, and with the Russians out of the picture, only Britain remained in the self-proclaimed emperor's way. The peace did not last; when the Prussians became more sceptical of the French in 1806, Europe was on the road to war once more.


Russians retreat across a frozen Lake Satschan, but Napoleon's cannons shatter the ice and many are drowned

NAPOLEON & RELIGION

Napoleon knew that religion posed a challenge to his ambitions for a personal empire, but it was a challenge that he was determined to meet

Words **Catherine Curzon**

As Napoleon achieved and consolidated what would become near-unrivalled power, he was quick to recognise the importance of religion's position not only in France but across the empire he was bent on creating. He understood the deep and complex relationship between the French populace and the Catholic Church and, perhaps better than the generation of politicians who preceded him as rulers, he recognised the need to win the approval of France's Catholic majority.

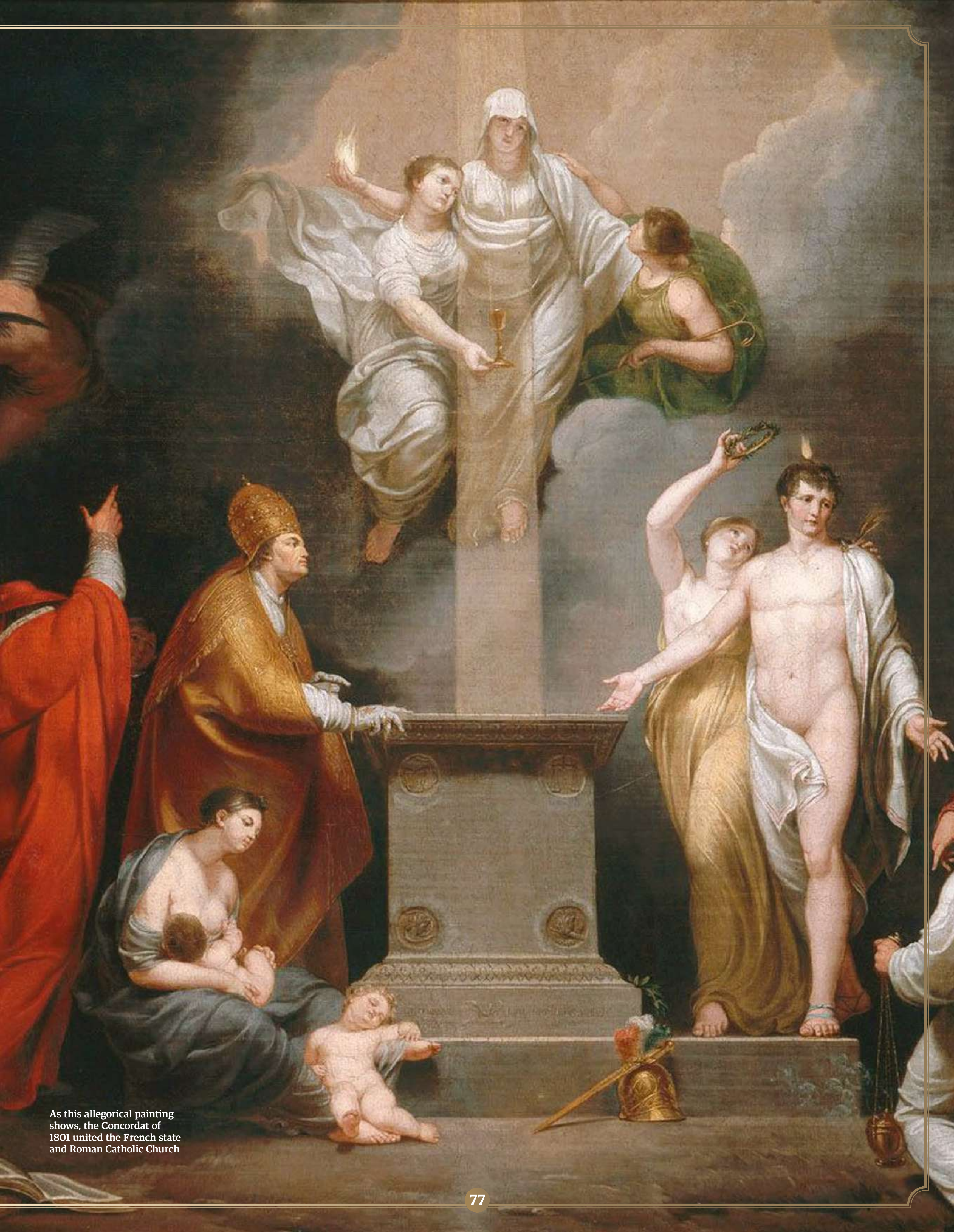
During the Revolution the National Convention had regarded the religion's close ties with the ancien régime as dangerous and had moved to 'dechristianise' France, ridding it of religion and banning public worship and religious symbols. In its place the revolutionary government initiated the Cult of Reason. Churches became temples of reason and in them, the Goddess of Reason was celebrated. Eventually, in 1795, the formal separation of church and state was confirmed and religious practices were allowed once more, on the condition that they were carried out in adherence with strict laws.

Napoleon could see what his predecessors could not. He recognised the value for society in religion not only as a means to win the favour of opponents of religion, but in more tangible reasons too. Though not personally religious, he understood that there were widespread benefits to having the Catholic Church as a friend, not a foe, for they would provide not only financial assistance for initiatives such as healthcare and education, but no group had a wider social reach than the church and as friends of his regime, the church would support and promulgate his regime's ideals across the country.

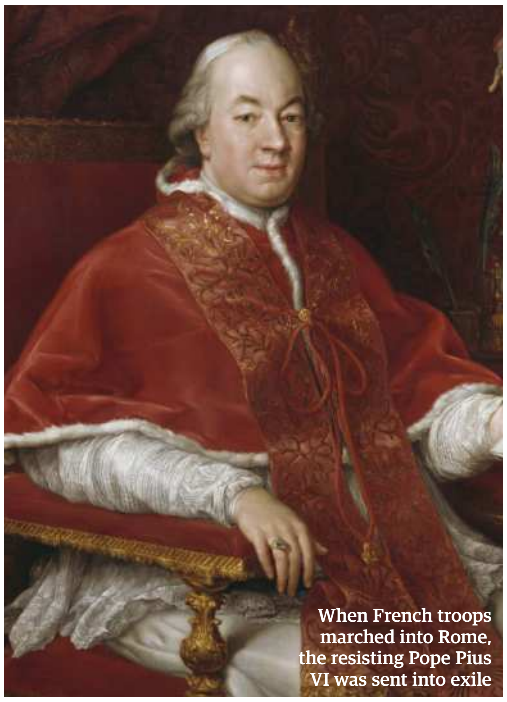
Napoleon, however, had not always enjoyed a happy relationship with the Catholic Church. In 1796, years before he became first consul, Napoleon's troops invaded Italy, defeating the papal soldiers they met and leading Pope Pius VI to sue for peace, which was granted in 1797. At the end of that year rioting broke out in Rome that resulted in the death of a popular French general, Léonard Mathurin Duphot, who was shot by papal troops. This killing gave Napoleon the leverage he needed to occupy Rome. The occupation began on 10 February 1798 and with it Napoleon declared the start of a new Roman Republic in place of the Papal States. In accordance with this, Pope Pius VI was commanded to renounce his powers. Understandably, the pontiff resisted. He was taken into custody and spirited across the country, enduring kilometres of gruelling road until he reached Drôme, where he died. He was 81 years old and at the time, had been the longest reigning pope in history.

Even in death, Pius was not allowed to rest. For nearly six months his body languished, embalmed but unburied, until Napoleon recognised the propaganda value in allowing the late pope to be laid to rest. By this time he was already planning to reintegrate the Catholic Church to France, so interring the deceased pope was a natural act of respect and Napoleon had the body transported back to Rome for a Catholic funeral.

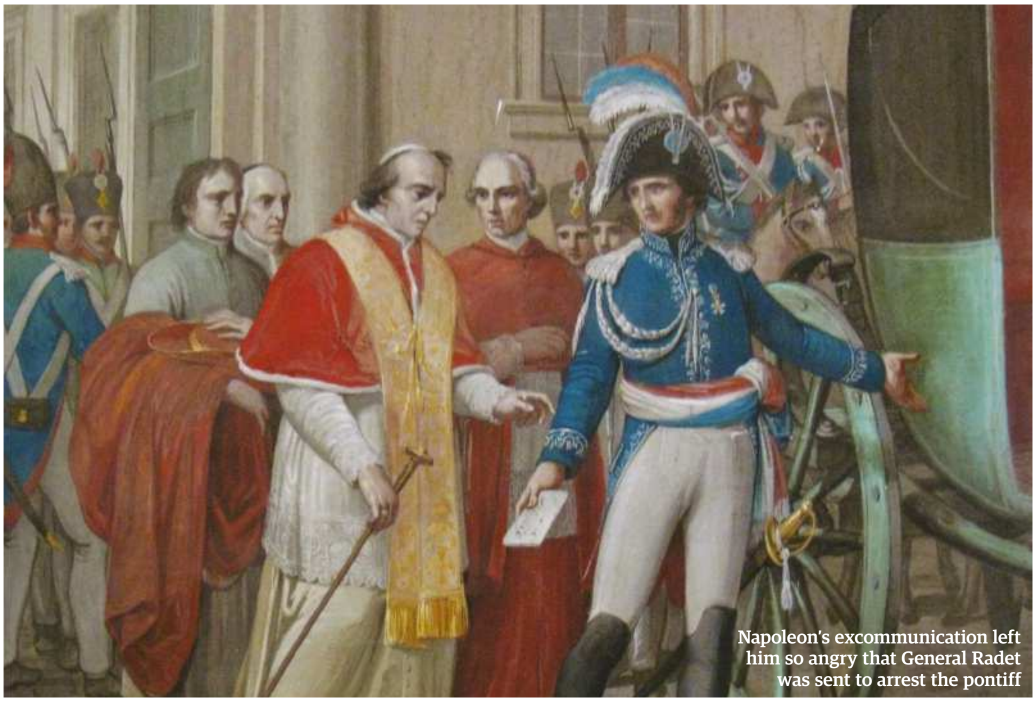
The Directory regime that had been installed by the coup d'état in September 1797 had spent two years attempting to secularise France but within months of his appointment as first consul in 1799, Napoleon began to reverse the decisions that regime had made. He intended to restore Catholicism in France to an extent, enough to appear sensitive to the religion and its followers, but not so much that it gained too much control. Napoleon granted amnesty to exiled priests and reopened more and more churches, but there was no question that the church would be allowed to return to the power it enjoyed under the monarchy.



As this allegorical painting shows, the Concordat of 1801 united the French state and Roman Catholic Church



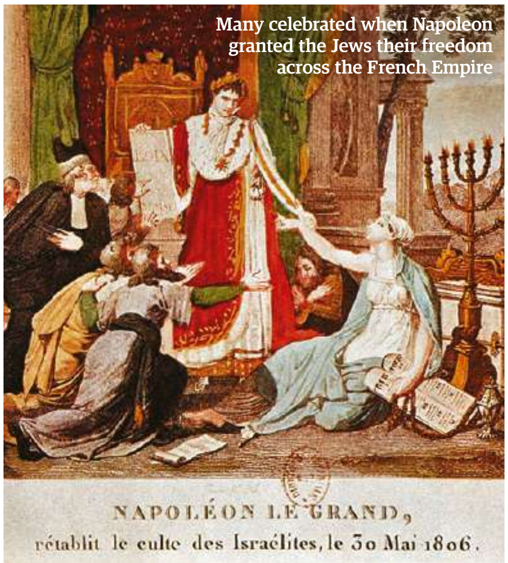
When French troops marched into Rome, the resisting Pope Pius VI was sent into exile



Napoleon's excommunication left him so angry that General Radet was sent to arrest the pontiff

Nowhere is Napoleon's understanding of the importance of the Catholic Church more clearly communicated than in the Concordat signed by Napoleon and Pope Pius VII in the early hours of 15 July 1801. The Concordat set out in writing the reconciliation of France and the Roman Catholic Church, which was recognised as the majority religion but not, crucially, the state religion. In return, the church renounced its claims to any property that had been lost during the Revolution and agreed to act under the authority of the state. Under the terms of the Concordat, the clergy had to swear an oath of allegiance to the state, which in turn took on responsibility for paying their salaries and establishing the territorial limits of their dioceses. Whilst Catholics would enjoy freedom to worship so long as they caused no public disturbance, the responsibility for appointing bishops was Napoleon's alone. Likewise, any instructions received from Rome were to be rubber stamped by the government. In Napoleonic France, the Vatican's authority counted for little.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this proved to be the start of a very shaky relationship between Napoleon and the pontiff. As the years passed and Napoleon's coronation as emperor beckoned, he was determined to have the pope present at the ceremony. However, he eschewed some of the traditions of the coronation, clearly signalling that the church had no power over this particular regime. Though the pope was in attendance to officiate, he wasn't required to carry out the traditional crowning of the new ruler, despite this being an honour that had its foundations in Charlemagne's reign in the 9th century. Instead, Napoleon put the crown on his own head, leaving no one in any doubt that he was the ruler of his own destiny.


NAPOLÉON LE GRAND,
rétablit le culte des Israélites, le 30 Mai 1806.

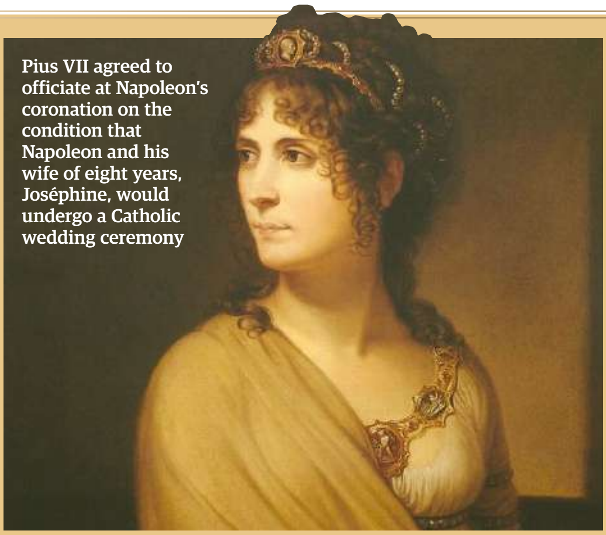
Many celebrated when Napoleon granted the Jews their freedom across the French Empire

A MATCH MADE IN CHURCH

When Napoleon married Joséphine de Beauharnais in 1796, she was six years his senior and a widow, having lost her husband during the Revolution. In accordance with French society at the time, the marriage ceremony was a civil one, not religious.

Eight years later, Napoleon's ambassador to Rome, Cardinal Joseph Fesch, invited Pope Pius VII to attend Napoleon's coronation at Notre Dame, to witness his investiture as emperor of France. In the past the pope's involvement had been an active one and he had crowned the monarch, but this time Napoleon was intent on crowning himself, leaving the pope to officiate. Despite this demotion, it was important to Napoleon that the pontiff be in attendance as it would be a clear indication of the ongoing good relations between the Vatican and France.

The pope accepted on one condition. If he was to be present at the coronation, then Napoleon and Joséphine must first submit to a proper Catholic wedding ceremony. Though the couple had been perfectly satisfied with their civil wedding for the best part of a decade, Napoleon agreed to this condition in order to ensure that the pope had no reason to refuse to officiate. The couple were married by Cardinal Fesch in a Catholic ceremony on 1 December 1804. The ceremony was held in secret but that was enough for the pontiff and when Napoleon was crowned emperor of the French, his coronation was officiated by Pius VII, just as he had wished.



Pius VII agreed to officiate at Napoleon's coronation on the condition that Napoleon and his wife of eight years, Joséphine, would undergo a Catholic wedding ceremony

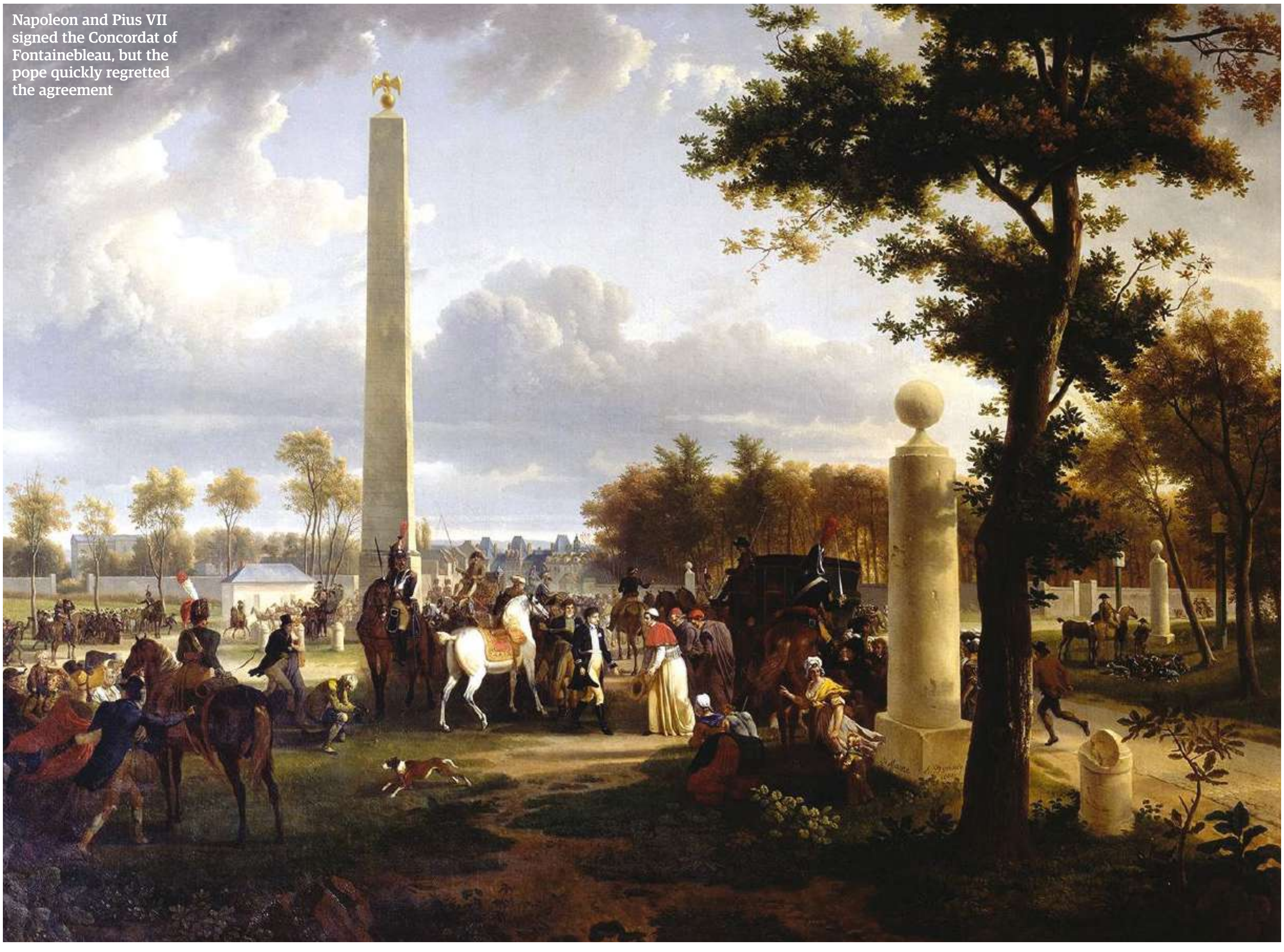
Conversely, he had no qualms about using the church to glorify his own name. Though he recognised Ascension Day, All Saints' Day, and Christmas Day as feast days, he added another feast day for Saint Napoleon, who replaced St Louis, the patron saint of the Bourbon monarchs. To further slam home the message that he was chosen by God, Napoleon used religious imagery and language at his Italian coronation too, establishing himself as God's anointed. For Napoleon, a man who knew all about power and pomp, religion was another blunt instrument of state, something to be controlled so that it could be used to control in turn.

Despite the presence of Pope Pius VII at Napoleon's coronation, things did not stay rosy between the Catholic Church and the French state. As Napoleon continued as emperor, the pontiff became frustrated at France's continued encroachment into Papal land, while the Vatican had nothing to show for it. His efforts to build a relationship with Napoleon by attending his coronation had met with little encouragement and though the relationship was civil, it was far from exemplary. Napoleon introduced the Concordat to his territories outside France, applying all the religious controls there that he had introduced in 1801. When French troops occupied Ancona in 1805, with the aim of keeping a British fleet at bay during the run up to Austerlitz, Pius was so frustrated that he wrote to Napoleon asking if the church could expect anything in return for the loyalty and consideration it had given to France. Napoleon didn't reply until after his victory at Austerlitz and when he did, he was far from happy. He told Pius that he was aware of Catholic interests in Britain and Russia and the letter from the pope had been the final straw. A war of words broke out, with Pius demanding that France hand Venice back to Rome and this time, when Napoleon replied, he was furious.

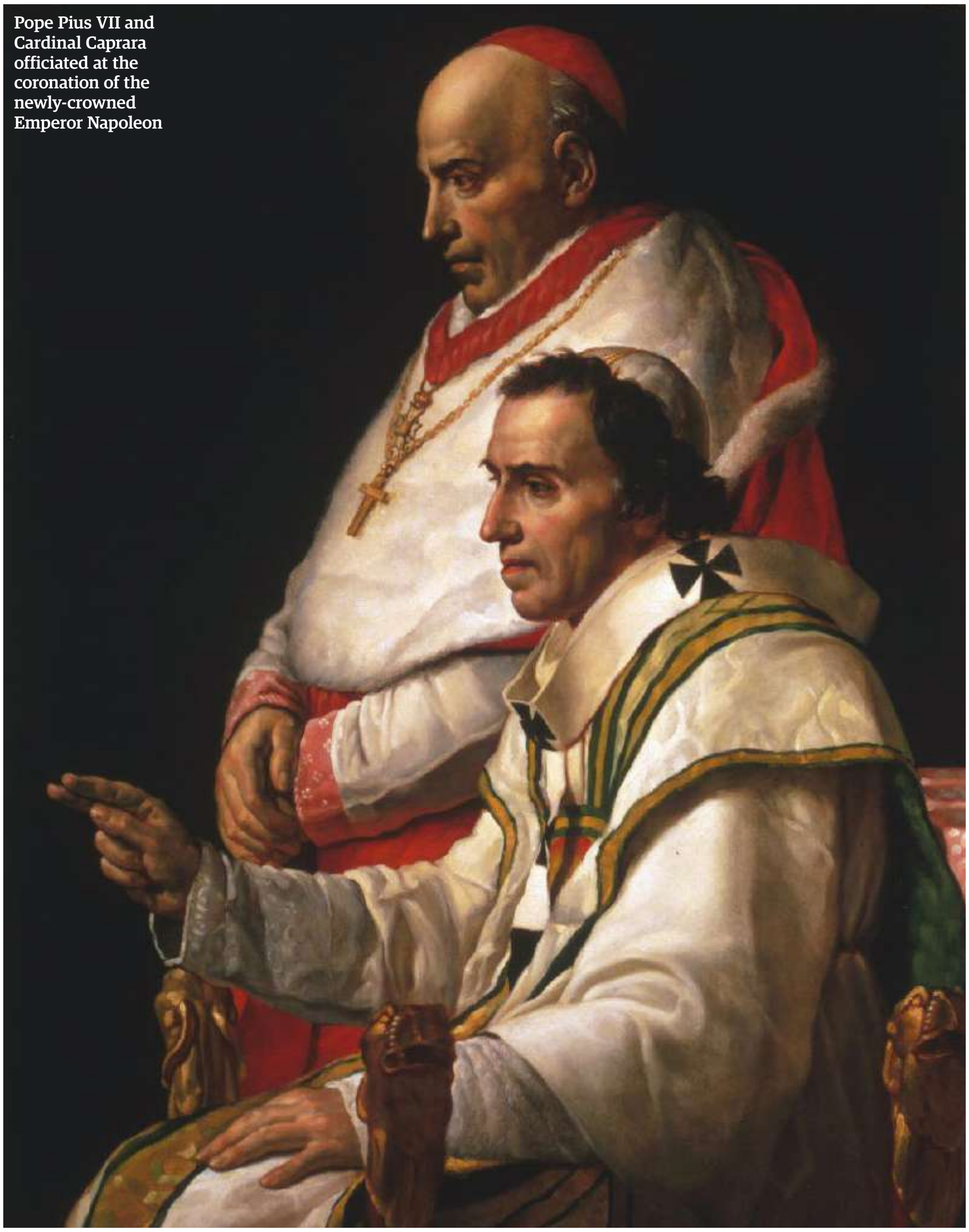
The relationship remained frosty over the next few years while France continued to encroach on Papal territory until, in 1808, Pius snapped back in the only way he could. With no military might, he went instead for the passive-aggressive approach. When Napoleon nominated bishops, Pius blocked them as the Concordat allowed him to do. In 1809 Napoleon paid him back by annexing Rome itself. This was the act that finally pushed the pope over the edge.

The pontiff excommunicated Napoleon. The emperor was furious at this slight and declared that the pope must have lost his mind and should probably be detained. To enforce the point, he captured Castel Sant'Angelo and pointed the canons straight at the pope's bedroom. It seemed as though things couldn't get any worse but, upon hearing how furious Napoleon was with the pontiff, General Étienne Radet led a small group of soldiers over the walls of the Quirinal Palace, where the pope was in residence. They stormed into the palace and amid a backdrop of chaotic scenes, abducted Pope Pius VII.

When news of the kidnapping reached Napoleon he took the decision not to release the pontiff, but to keep him under house arrest for five difficult years. Seen as a dignified victim,



Napoleon and Pius VII signed the Concordat of Fontainebleau, but the pope quickly regretted the agreement



Pope Pius VII and Cardinal Caprara officiated at the coronation of the newly-crowned Emperor Napoleon

Pope Pius VII became a symbol of Napoleon's conflict with the Catholic Church, and won the support of the faithful

Pius' treatment at the hands of Napoleon aroused widespread sympathy for the pope. When Napoleon learned that Pius had made his place of exile in Savona a new ecclesiastical centre, the petulant emperor decided to transfer him to Fontainebleau, which he reached only after an arduous and difficult journey. It was while here that Pius was presented with the Concordat of Fontainebleau in 1813.

This new Concordat met with resistance from the pope, who found its content disagreeable, especially the many clauses that increased the powers of French bishops at the expense of Rome, as well as further reducing Papal territories and Catholic dioceses. Eventually the physically and emotionally exhausted Pius agreed to ten of the articles in the Concordat as worthy of further discussion, on the condition that it be kept secret. Instead, Napoleon published the agreement and in March, two months after he had signed, Pius withdrew his support of the Concordat. Napoleon ignored his disavowal but things were moving fast elsewhere and eventually, Napoleon's fall from power stopped the implementation of the Concordat of Fontainebleau. During the Hundred Days, Napoleon even confirmed that the Concordat of 1801 would stand, and it remained enshrined in law until 1901.

Napoleon, however, didn't only limit his religious activities to Catholicism. He emancipated Catholics in Protestant countries and vice versa, in addition to lifting restrictions on Jews, vastly improving their rights in the hope of attracting them to France and the rights they would enjoy there. Napoleon even convened the Grand Sanhedrin, which took its name from the Sanhedrin, the history Jewish legislative body. The Grand Sanhedrin considered 12 questions regarding Jews in France, including issues related to marriage, rights and the appointment of rabbis. Although the council was expected to reply to these questions, they were also expected to give the answers that Napoleon wanted, which they mostly did. In fact, his treatment of the Jews was seen as so unthinkable that it caused the Russian Orthodox Church to refer to him as the Antichrist!

In 1807 Napoleon recognised Judaism as an official faith of France, alongside Protestantism and, of course, Catholicism. Protestantism had been generally prohibited in France from 1685 to 1787, when Roman Catholicism was the state religion. It had further suffered thanks to the Revolutionary government's attempts to secularise the nation but when Napoleon came to power, all of that changed.

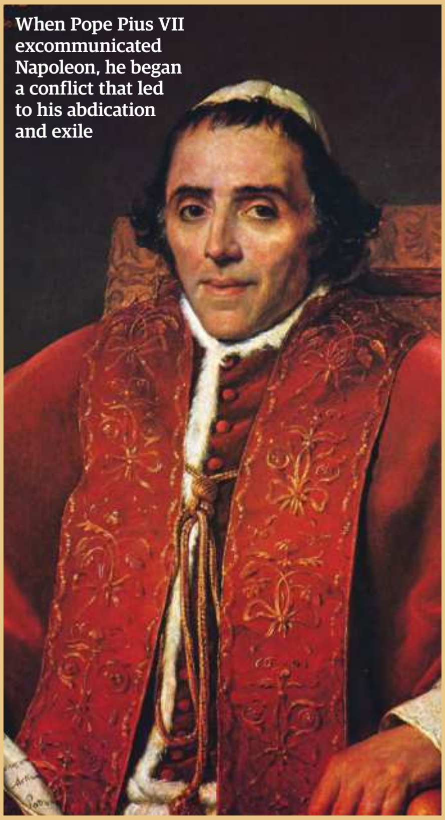
VII·CLARAMONTIO·CAESENATI·PONTIFICI·MAXIMO
CVLES·CARD·CONSALVI ROMANVS·AB·EO·CREATVS

Roman Catholicism would never again be the state religion and in 1802, Napoleon's Organic Articles formally recognised Protestantism in France, adding Protestant clergymen to state ceremonies and the government payroll.

Napoleon's attitude to religion was in a lot of ways demonstrative of his attitude to many aspects of society. He understood the place religion held in society and the manner in which it could be not only divisive, but unifying too. Napoleon wasn't personally religious but he saw in religion the foundations of civilised society and saw Catholicism as the most preferable, though not so indispensable that it would be recognised as the state religion of France.

Ultimately, religion would play an important role in the downfall of Napoleon. His actions against Pope Pius VII and the humiliating terms of the Concordat of Fontainebleau only resulted in undoing much of the work he had attempted to do to win the favour of Catholics over the years of his reign. From the occupation of the Papal States to the kidnapping of the pontiff, relations between France and the Vatican unravelled at an alarming rate, yet Napoleon's split from the Catholic Church didn't last forever. After his fall, the Congress of Vienna restored the majority of the Papal States to the Vatican and Pope Pius VII returned to Rome and even offered sanctuary to the family of the deposed emperor. Napoleon himself reconciled with the Catholic Church in his final months and left instructions that, when he was taking his last breath, he wished to die in accordance with the rites of the Catholic Church. Even for a conqueror like Napoleon, it seemed as though religion had its place when he faced the great beyond.

THE EMPEROR EXCOMMUNICATED



When Pope Pius VII excommunicated Napoleon, he began a conflict that led to his abdication and exile

Although Napoleon didn't follow any particular religion, he was in fact a Roman Catholic. He didn't follow Catholic doctrines and he was certainly not devout but he was still a member of the church and that meant that he could ultimately be excommunicated, should the pope believe there were grounds to do so.

Napoleon more than supplied the pontiff with suitable grounds to excommunicate him when he sent his troops into Rome, occupying it and annexing it as part of the French Empire. He then issued two decrees in which he severely reprimanded the pope and his predecessors for their behaviour over the years and organised a body to administrate Rome in place of the Vatican. As a final full stop, the papal flag was lowered, sending a very visible message across the state.

In response, Pope Pius VII issued a Bull declaring that Emperor Napoleon had been excommunicated from the Catholic Church. It was the start of a long and brutal war of attrition between the two men. Upon hearing of his excommunication, Napoleon wrote to his brother-in-law Murat, who also happened to be the king of Naples, and raged that the pope had lost his mind and should be immediately confined before he could make any more odd decisions. These fateful words, written in anger, led directly to the kidnapping and exile of Pope Pius VII, which did considerable damage to the relationship of Napoleon's empire and the Roman Catholics who lived under his rule.

NAPOLEON I & MARIE LOUISE

Despite the desperate efforts of his wife, Napoleon was still lacking a legitimate male heir to inherit his vast empire – so it was time to marry another

Words **Melanie Clegg**

Napoleon and Joséphine were married in a modest ceremony on 9 March 1796, just two days before Napoleon left her behind in Paris to invade Italy with his newly acquired army. At the time people thought that Joséphine, a sophisticated aristocratic widow whose first husband had been guillotined during the Reign of Terror, had married beneath her, but their roles were very quickly reversed and within just a few years she had been relegated to a secondary role in the relationship, apparently happy to play the submissive wife.

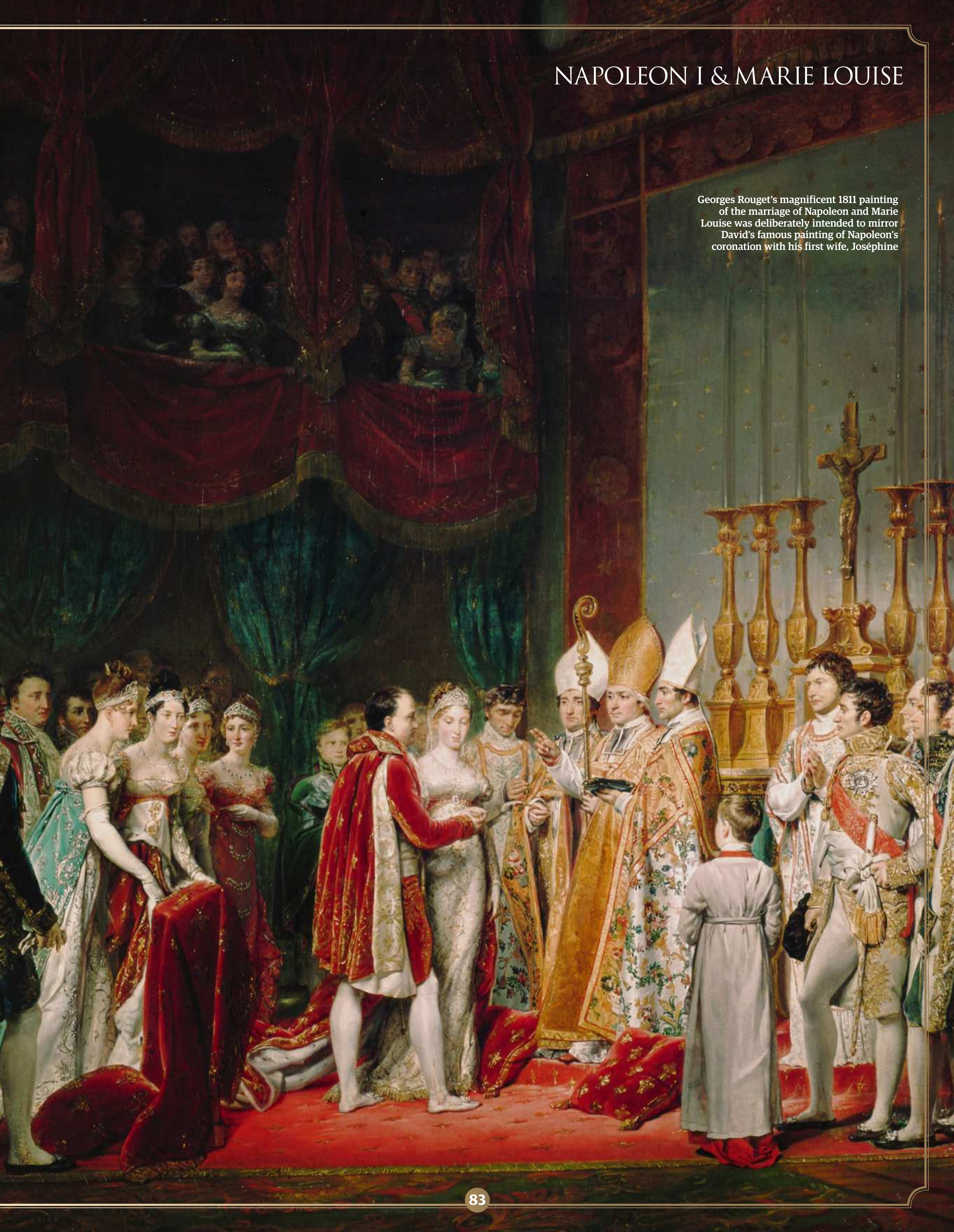
Although Napoleon had originally been completely infatuated by Joséphine, who found his ardour rather embarrassing and could barely even be bothered to reply to his frequent love letters, his feelings for her significantly cooled after he was presented with evidence that she had taken a lover while he was on campaign in Egypt. Although they were eventually reconciled, he would no longer be faithful to her. While outwardly harmonious, their marriage fell into further difficulties when Joséphine, who was six years older than her husband, failed to conceive a child, despite medical assistance. As she already had two children by her first marriage, she was able to convince her husband that the fault lay with him – a ruse that quickly fell apart when one of his mistresses became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Although there was some doubt about the child's parentage, due to the fact that Napoleon's brother-in-law had also been sleeping with the same woman, Napoleon still took this as a sign that he was fertile and began to secretly make plans for a divorce. It would still be quite a while before he put them into action, though, for he still loved his wife and couldn't yet bring himself to leave her.

However, when Napoleon was crowned emperor of the French in December 1804, his impatience to have a male heir only intensified as he planned to create a new ruling dynasty that would be equally as powerful and magnificent as the Bourbon monarchs that had been toppled from the throne during the Revolution. Now aged 41 and aware that time was beginning to run out, Joséphine desperately did everything that she could to prevent the now-inevitable divorce, even persuading Napoleon to make her grandson Napoleon Charles (the son of her daughter Hortense and Napoleon's brother Louis) his heir. However, when the boy died of croup in 1807, Napoleon refused to make his younger brother – who would later succeed as Napoleon III – his successor, instead hinting that he intended to divorce Joséphine, find a new wife and start his own family.

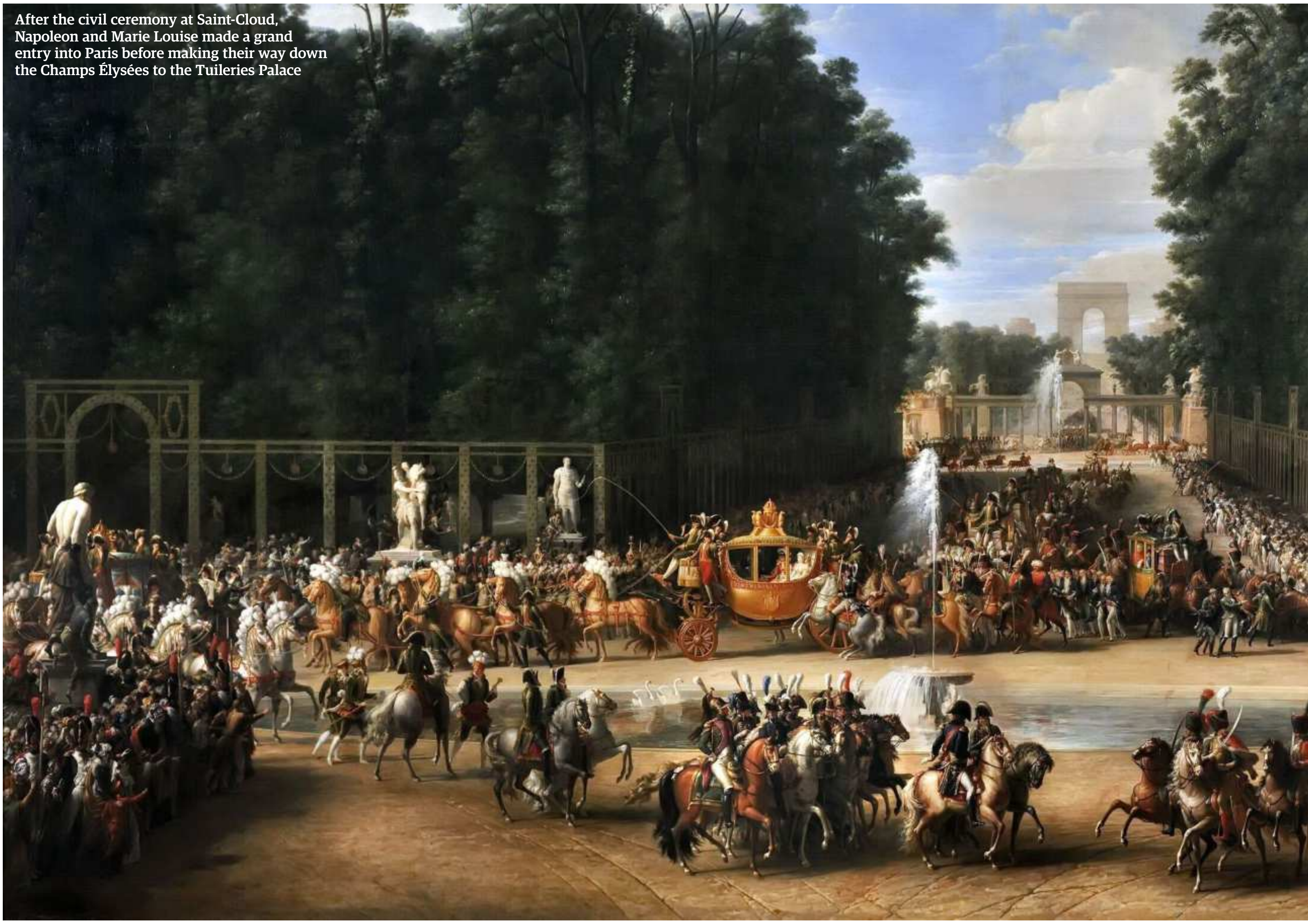
The painful situation dragged on until November 1809, when Napoleon finally informed a devastated Joséphine that he wanted to end their marriage and that it was in fact her duty to step aside and let him produce an heir to the throne. The couple were divorced in a grand ceremony on 10 January 1810, with most of the court there to witness Joséphine's capitulation. Although Napoleon was genuinely distressed to part with the wife that he had loved for nearly 14 years, he quickly seemed to recover and was soon busily looking for another wife.

As the conqueror of Europe and newly minted emperor of the French, he was determined right from the very start to make the grandest match possible. He was also keen that his future bride should be young and come from fertile stock, shocking his courtiers by rather ungallantly referring to her as a "walking womb". It quickly became clear that there were really only two contenders – the 15-year-old Grand Duchess Anna Pavlovna of Russia, the pretty younger sister of Tsar Alexander I, and 18-year-old Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria, daughter of Emperor Francis II, who was less pretty but known to be shy, biddable and, most importantly, from a famously fertile family.

Initially, Napoleon preferred the Russian match, but he became impatient and swiftly changed his



Georges Rouget's magnificent 1811 painting of the marriage of Napoleon and Marie Louise was deliberately intended to mirror David's famous painting of Napoleon's coronation with his first wife, Joséphine



After the civil ceremony at Saint-Cloud, Napoleon and Marie Louise made a grand entry into Paris before making their way down the Champs Élysées to the Tuileries Palace

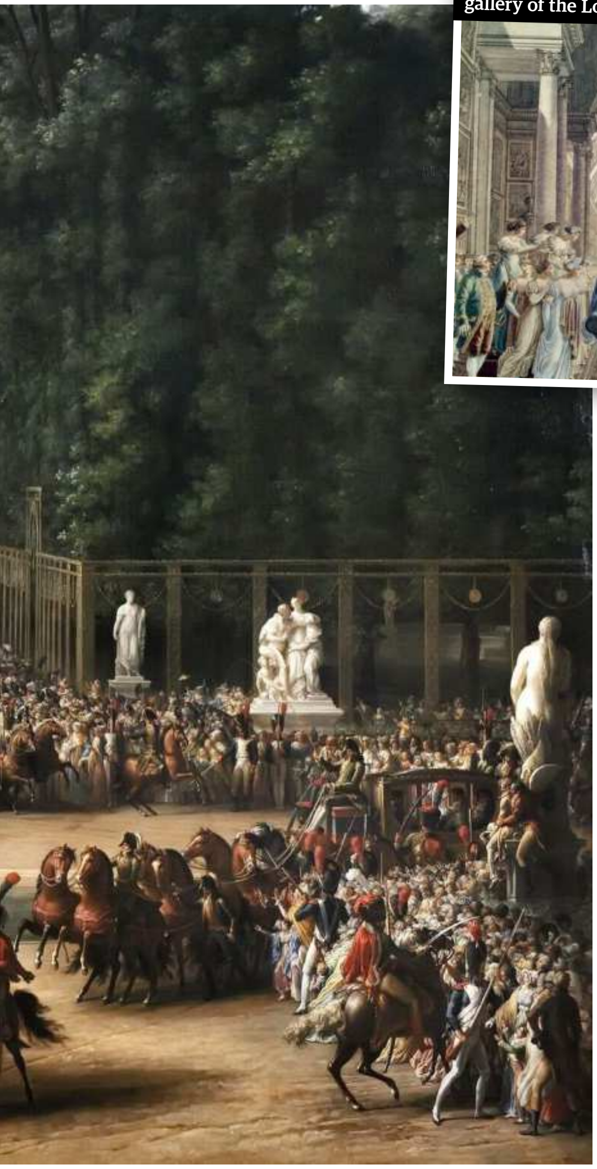
“NAPOLEON WAS ALREADY BUSYING HIMSELF ORGANISING A MAGNIFICENT WEDDING”

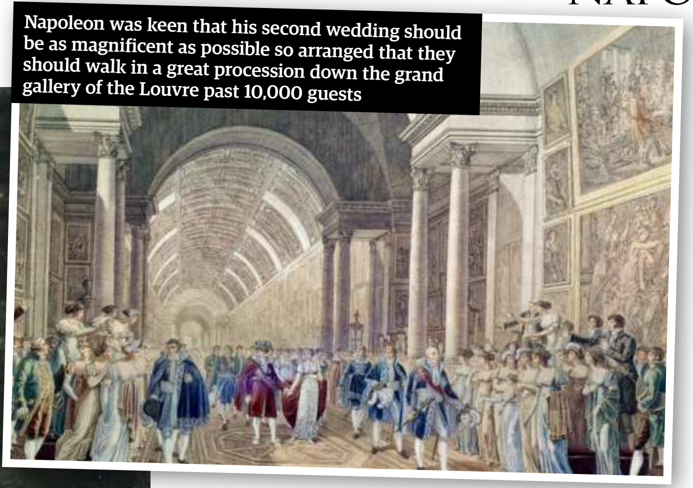
mind when Tsar Alexander, who had no desire to see his sister married to the French emperor, failed to respond in what Napoleon considered to be a timely manner to his proposal. Insulted by Alexander’s hesitation, Napoleon, with his usual lack of tact, despatched his step-son Eugène de Beauharnais to the Austrian embassy in Paris to ask for the hand of Marie Louise - along with a demand that a decision should be made immediately and the contract signed within 24 hours. The unfortunate Austrian ambassador, the Prince von Schwarzenberg, desperately tried to buy some time so that he could secure the agreement of the emperor but was forced to give in and accept the proposal, hoping that his decision would not mean the end of his diplomatic career.

When Marie Louise was first informed that Napoleon had opened marriage negotiations with her father, she was horrified. As great-niece of the doomed Marie Antoinette, she understandably had no desire whatsoever to go to France. On a more personal level she had been raised to think of Napoleon as a crass, low-born parvenu and the monstrous despoiler of Europe. The very idea of being married to such a man and then having to reign over the French - a people that the Austrian royal family regarded as perfidious, violent rabble - filled her with dread. She was also very fond of her family and was well aware that if she left for France, as her great-aunt had done 40 years earlier, there was very little chance that she would ever be able to return home to Austria or even see any of them ever again.

However, Marie Louise had been raised to obey her father and so made no argument when she was informed that the marriage would be going ahead, commenting only that “I wish only what my duty commands me to wish”. Perhaps she would have felt more favourably disposed towards her intimidating fiancé if she had known that he was already busying himself organising a magnificent wedding. He supervised the creation of a sumptuous bridal trousseau that included 64 new dresses from Joséphine’s favourite designer, Leroy, as well as exquisite jewels, such as a diamond and emerald parure (a jewellery set that comprised a tiara, necklace, earrings and hair comb) that was valued at over 3 million francs. He also had Joséphine’s old apartments redecorated in ‘virginal white’ for his new wife and even, rather optimistically, ordered some miniature uniforms for the son that he felt absolutely certain they were going to have together. After spending the last decade placing his relatives on European thrones and marrying them into various royal houses, it was now Napoleon’s turn to make the grandest royal marriage of all - and he was determined to do it in style.

The magnificent proxy wedding took place in the Augustinian Church next to the Hofburg

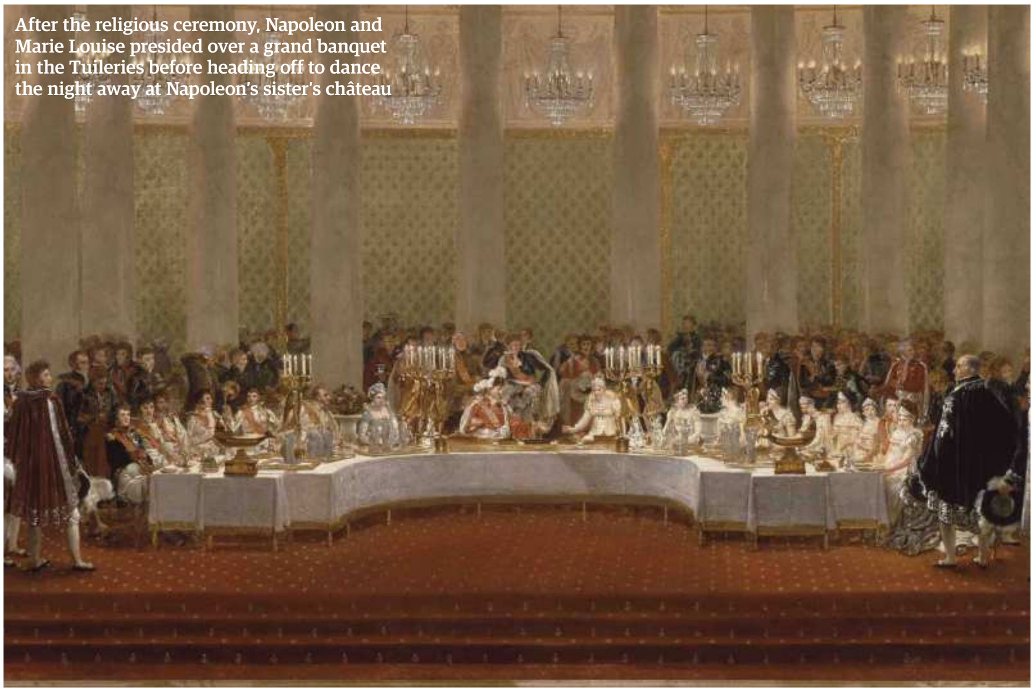




Napoleon was keen that his second wedding should be as magnificent as possible so arranged that they should walk in a great procession down the grand gallery of the Louvre past 10,000 guests

Palace in Vienna on 11 March 1810 with the bride's uncle Archduke Karl of Austria standing in for Napoleon. Two days later, Marie Louise left Vienna, perhaps forever, following roughly the same route to France that Marie Antoinette had taken in 1770 and being richly entertained by royal relatives and the dignitaries of every town that she passed through. At Braunau, on the border between Austria and Germany, she was met by a French party headed by Marshal Berthier, the Comte de Laborde, and her husband's sister Caroline Murat, the queen of Naples. It was those two who oversaw the traditional handing-over ceremony, during which Marie Louise was stripped of every Austrian possession and made to change into an entirely French outfit before formally joining the French for the rest of her journey.

The new empress disliked Caroline on sight, while for her part Napoleon's sister reported back to Paris that she liked Marie Louise very much and that although she was not very pretty, she had "charming blonde hair, hands and feet, a cultivated mind and dignified bearing; all in all she was very amiable and sweet". They travelled together through Germany, visiting Munich and



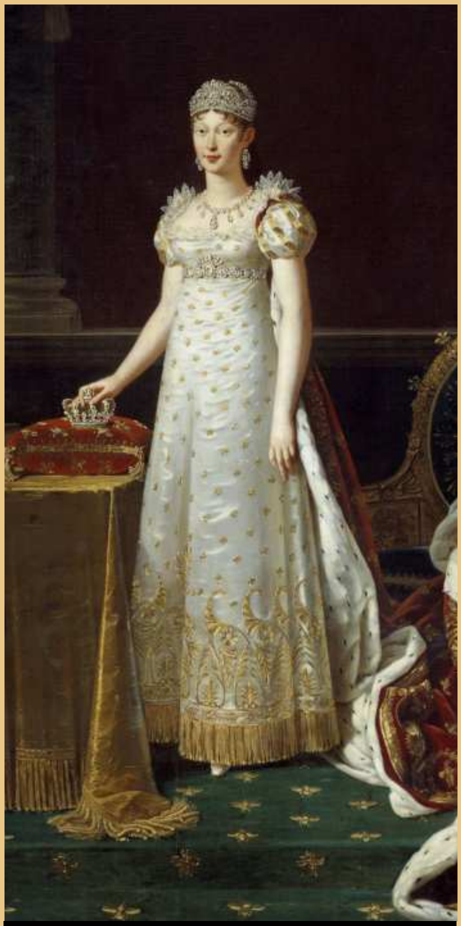
After the religious ceremony, Napoleon and Marie Louise presided over a grand banquet in the Tuileries before heading off to dance the night away at Napoleon's sister's château

MARIE LOUISE OF AUSTRIA

Marie Louise was born in the Hofburg Palace in Vienna on 12 December 1791 and was the first child of the Archduke Francis of Austria, a nephew of Marie Antoinette, and his wife Maria Theresa of Naples and Sicily, who was also his first cousin. Francis succeeded his father as Holy Roman emperor a year after Marie Louise was born and she would consequently spend her childhood in the magnificent Viennese palaces that were owned by the Habsburg dynasty.

Although she had been raised to hate the French, thanks to the fate of her great-aunt Marie Antoinette, she was nonetheless thoroughly tutored in the French language and would also become fluent in English, Italian, Latin and Spanish. Her marriage to Napoleon would be surprisingly happy, especially as she presented him with his much-longed-for son on 20 March 1811, almost exactly a year after their first meeting.

She returned to Vienna after her husband's final defeat in 1814 and was given the title duchess of Parma. After Napoleon's death in 1821, she married her lover, Count Adam von Neipperg, with whom she had secretly already had three children.



Although she was extremely shy and preferred to remain out of the public eye as much as possible, Marie Louise looks every inch an empress in this 1814 portrait by Robert Lefevre

Stuttgart, where they were entertained by the king of Württemberg, before continuing on to Strasbourg. Napoleon was almost beside himself with impatience as he waited for his bride's arrival, even if he was receiving reports that she was only really pretty "from a distance" and, worse still, she was significantly taller than him. "I don't care if she is pretty," he declared. "So long as she is kind and gives me healthy sons then I will love her as if she is the most beautiful girl in the world."

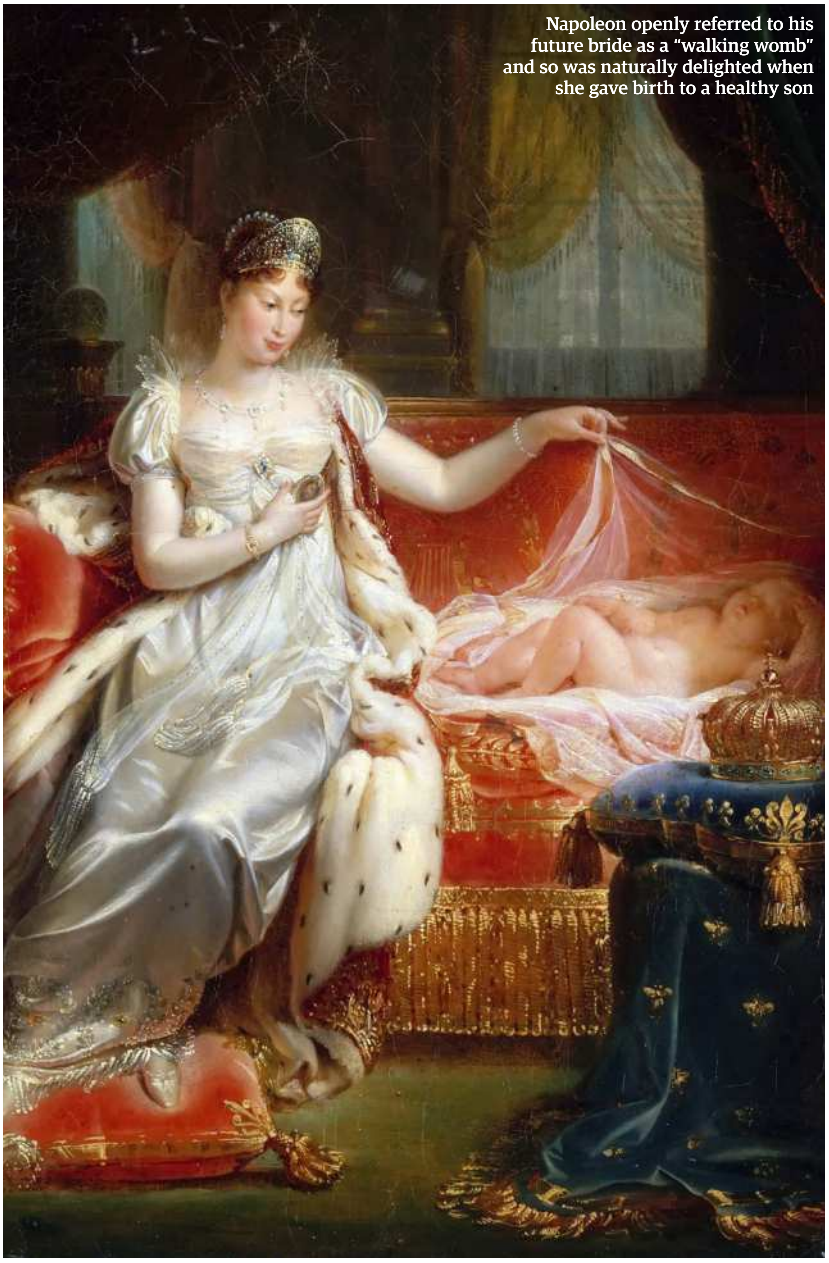
On 27 March, a rainy miserable day, Napoleon and Marie Louise met for the first time at the Château de Compiègne near Paris, with the new empress immediately winning her husband's heart by remarking that he was much better looking than his portrait. The couple were supposed to preside over a grand court gathering that evening but instead the always impatient Napoleon had Marie Louise taken up to her rooms and then soon after followed her in order to consummate their marriage as quickly as possible. The next morning he would emerge looking extremely pleased with himself, while Marie Louise was apparently not at all dismayed by his ardent behaviour.

The civil wedding, which had been required by French law since the Revolution, took place in the lovely old palace of Saint-Cloud on 1 April and was attended by the entire court and imperial family, including Joséphine's children Eugène and Hortense. Joséphine herself was not invited, and indeed was completely banned from appearing at court by Marie Louise. However, she tactfully said that she was pleased that Napoleon was marrying an Austrian archduchess as it made her own sacrifice worthwhile.

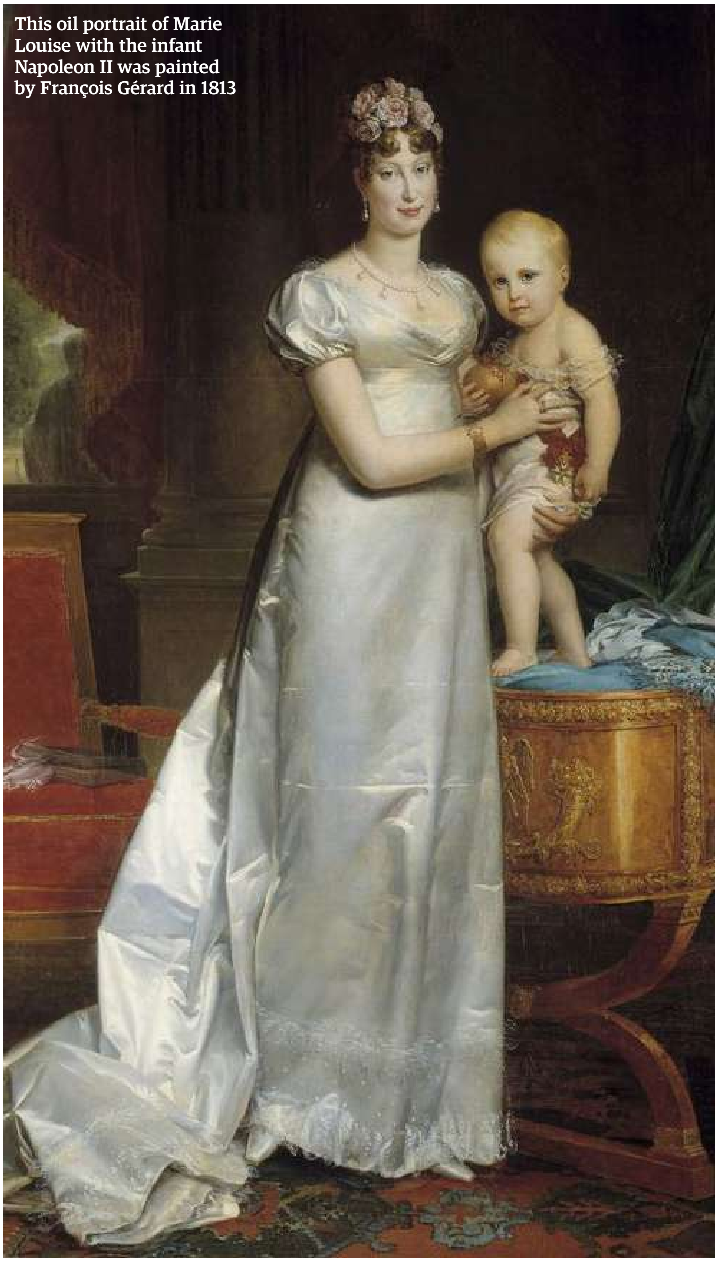
The following day, the imperial couple left Saint-Cloud at the head of an enormous procession of carriages and made their official entry of Paris, passing the still incomplete Arc de Triomphe and then making their way down the Champs Élysées to the Tuileries Palace, where the religious ceremony was to be held. The wedding took place in the Salon Carré in the adjoining Louvre, which had been stripped of the paintings on display and transformed into a magnificent temporary chapel.

The bridal couple and their entourage made their way through the grand gallery, which

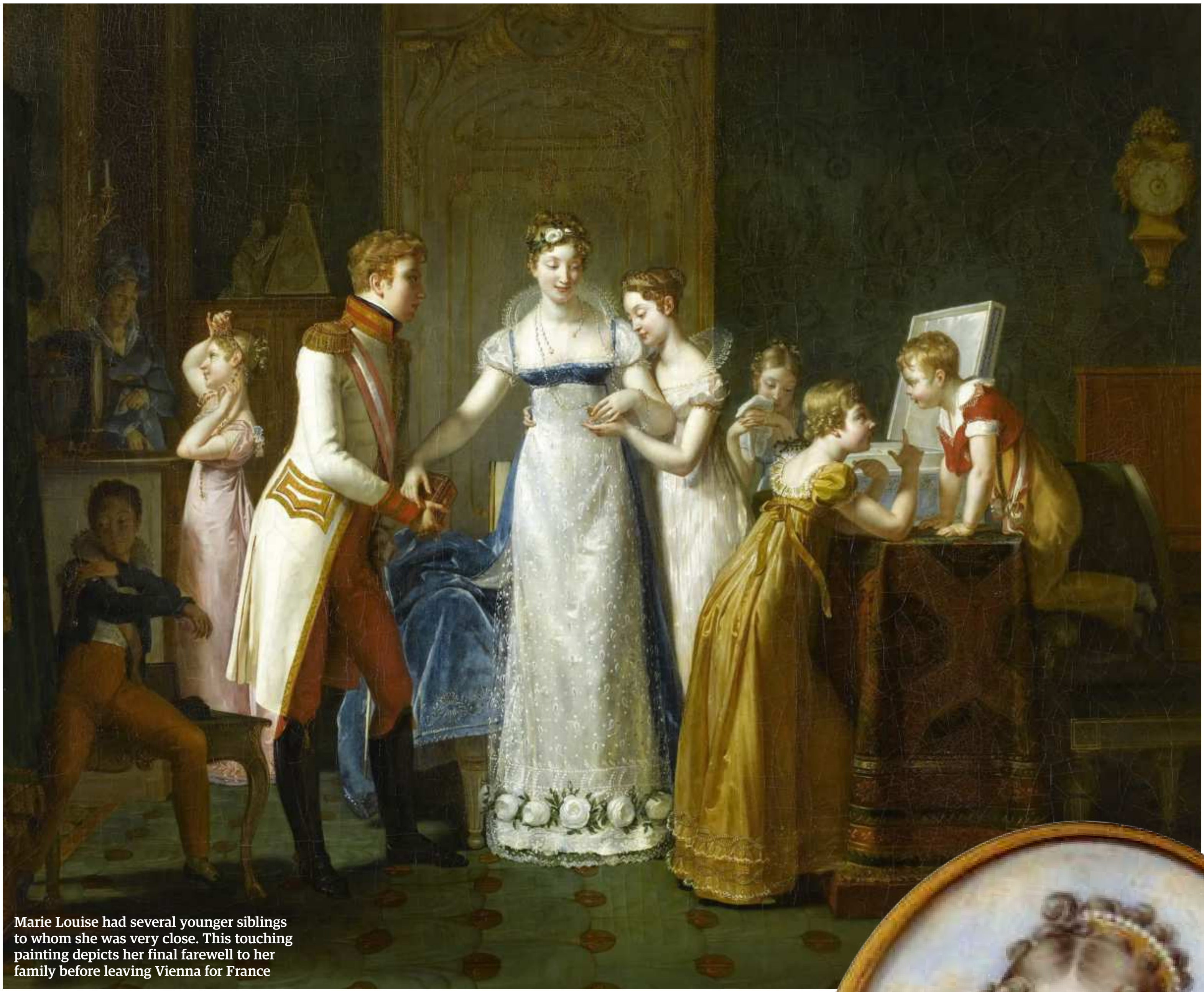
"NAPOLEON WAS ALMOST BESIDE HIMSELF WITH IMPATIENCE AS HE WAITED"



Napoleon openly referred to his future bride as a "walking womb" and so was naturally delighted when she gave birth to a healthy son



This oil portrait of Marie Louise with the infant Napoleon II was painted by François Gérard in 1813

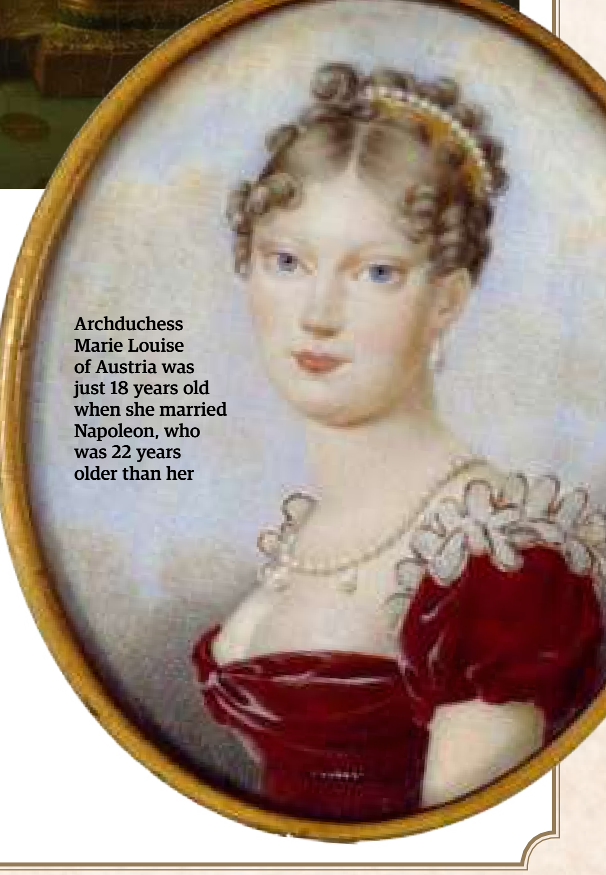


Marie Louise had several younger siblings to whom she was very close. This touching painting depicts her final farewell to her family before leaving Vienna for France

was lined with around 10,000 guests before entering the chapel. There, a further 400 guests were waiting to witness the ceremony, which was conducted by Napoleon's uncle Cardinal Fesch. Marie Louise looked radiant in the gold embroidered wedding gown that Napoleon had commissioned for her as well as her fabulous new diamond and emerald parure, while her groom looked equally stunning in white satin encrusted in gold bees, the Bonaparte symbol, and a red velvet jacket and cape topped with a huge black velvet hat decorated with white ostrich feathers and huge diamonds that had formerly belonged to Louis XVI.

Afterwards, while less favoured people outside on the streets of Paris revelled with copious amounts of free wine and food provided by Napoleon, the newlyweds and their entourage enjoyed a wedding banquet in the state rooms of the Tuileries Palace before departing by carriage for the Château de Neuilly on the outskirts of the capital, which belonged to the emperor's sister Pauline, Princess Borghese.

At the château, they enjoyed a lavish fête in their honour complete with a specially commissioned operetta, a miniature reproduction of Marie Louise's childhood home, the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, fireworks, living statues and thousands of fairy lights that twinkled everywhere in the gardens, turning them into a magical fairyland. Sadly, the celebratory ball held by the Austrian Ambassador a few months later was much less successful as it was prematurely ended by a terrible fire that killed several of the guests - luckily Napoleon and Marie Louise, who was already pregnant, managed to escape soon after the blaze began.

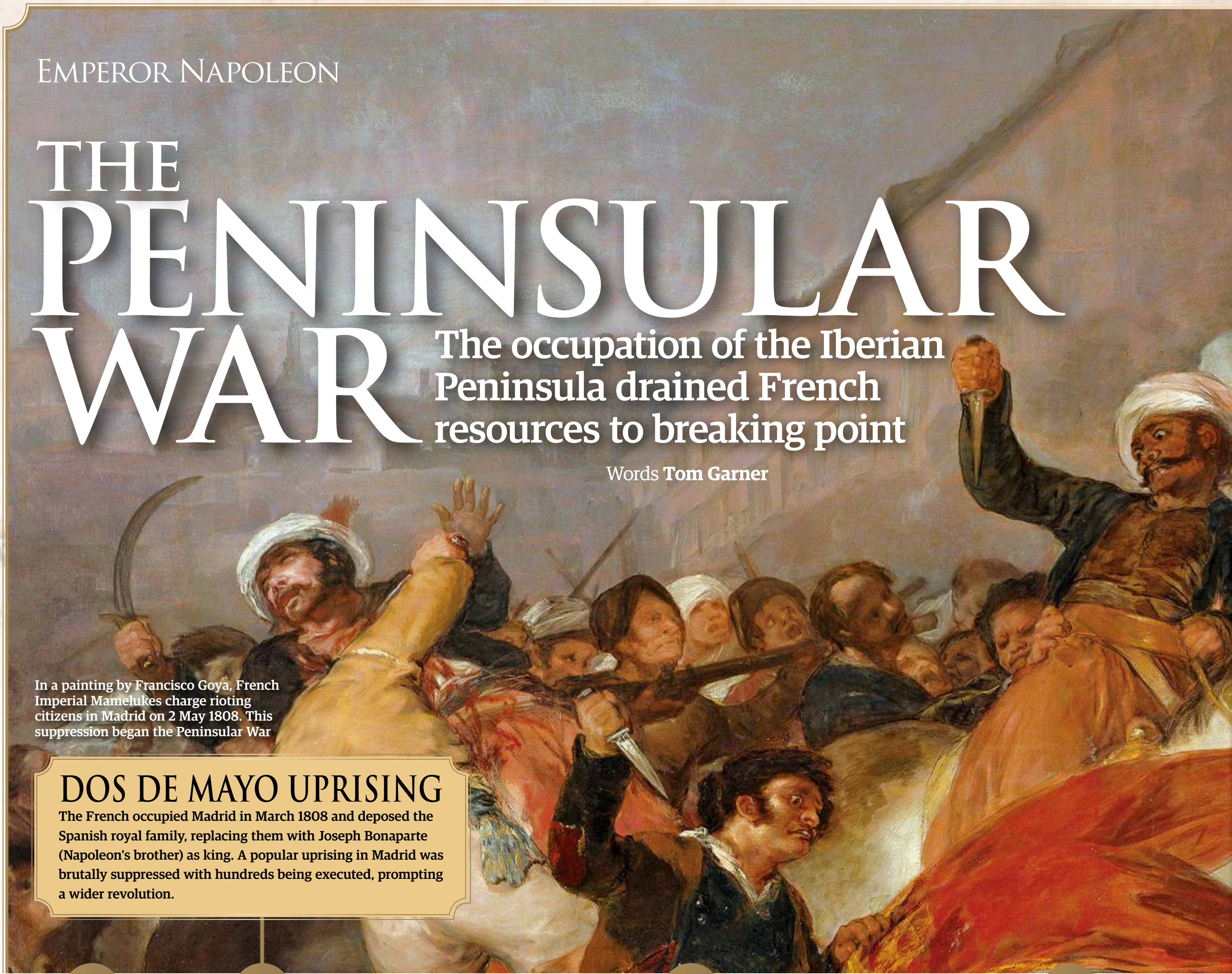


Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria was just 18 years old when she married Napoleon, who was 22 years older than her

THE PENINSULAR WAR

The occupation of the Iberian Peninsula drained French resources to breaking point

Words **Tom Garner**

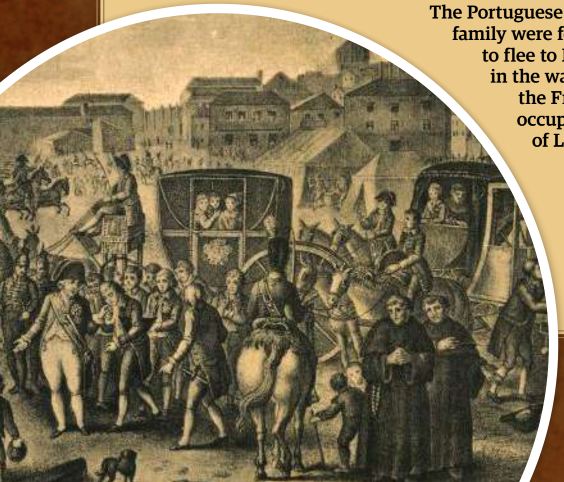


In a painting by Francisco Goya, French Imperial Mamelukes charge rioting citizens in Madrid on 2 May 1808. This suppression began the Peninsular War

1807

FRENCH INVASION OF PORTUGAL

On 18 October 1807, more than 100,000 French troops crossed the Spanish frontier and on 30 November, General Junot occupied Lisbon without bloodshed. The French were stationed in Spain where they uneasily co-existed with their then Spanish allies.



The Portuguese royal family were forced to flee to Brazil in the wake of the French occupation of Lisbon

May 1808

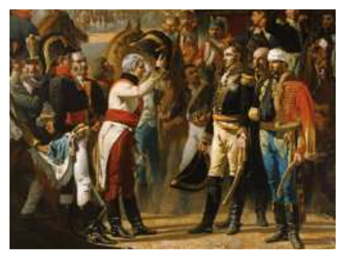
DOS DE MAYO UPRISING

The French occupied Madrid in March 1808 and deposed the Spanish royal family, replacing them with Joseph Bonaparte (Napoleon's brother) as king. A popular uprising in Madrid was brutally suppressed with hundreds being executed, prompting a wider revolution.

July 1808–January 1809

FRENCH ESCALATION

Following a Spanish victory at Bailén in July 1808, Napoleon personally intervened with 200,000 veteran troops. His armies forced the small British force under Sir John Moore to evacuate Spain by sea. Moore was killed at Corunna but his army was saved.

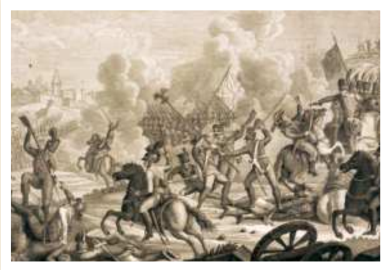


The French were forced to surrender almost 18,000 men after the Battle of Bailén. This decisive Spanish victory ironically led to the French occupying Spain in huge numbers

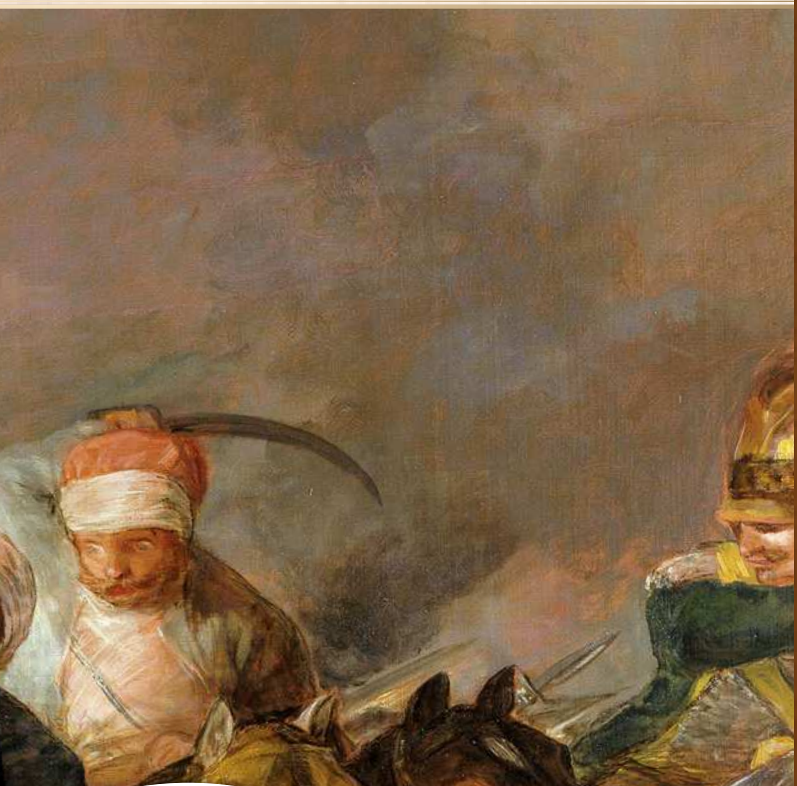
August 1808

BATTLE OF VIMEIRO

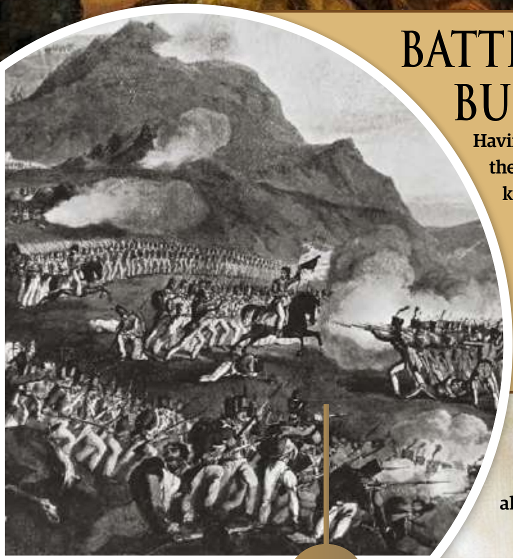
An Anglo-Portuguese army under General Arthur Wellesley defeated Junot at Vimeiro, forcing the French to evacuate Portugal by agreement. However, Wellesley was accused of letting the French escape and was temporarily replaced.



The Battle of Vimeiro was the first occasion where Napoleonic offensive tactics failed against British infantry line defences



SEPTEMBER 1810

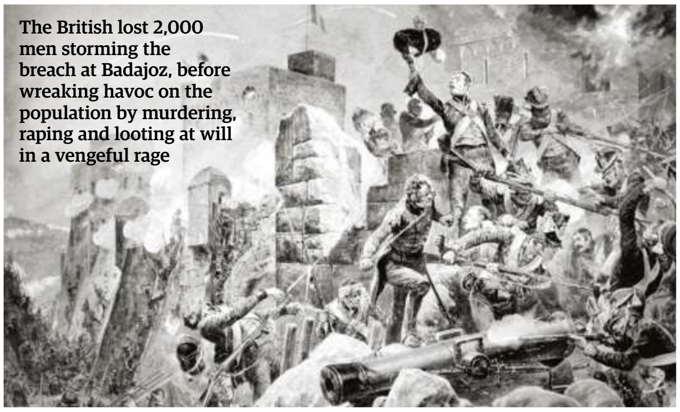


BATTLE OF BUÇACO

Having struggled to re-enter Spain, the reinstated Wellesley (now known as Viscount Wellington) fights a tough but victorious battle at Buçaco against Marshal Masséna. The clash is famous for the role of the reconstituted Portuguese Army in the victory.

The important Portuguese contribution at Buçaco emphasised that the Peninsular War was a truly allied fight against the French

JANUARY–APRIL 1812

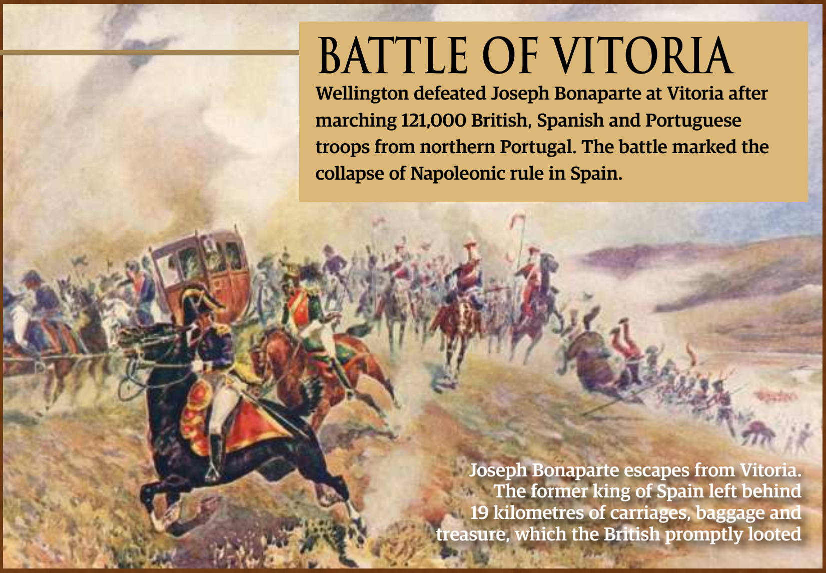


The British lost 2,000 men storming the breach at Badajoz, before wreaking havoc on the population by murdering, raping and looting at will in a vengeful rage

SIEGES OF CIUDAD RODRIGO AND BADAJOZ

These fortresses on the Spanish-Portuguese border had to be overcome for Wellington to advance into Spain. However, they proved hard to capture and the British lost thousands of men taking them, particularly at Badajoz.

JUNE 1813

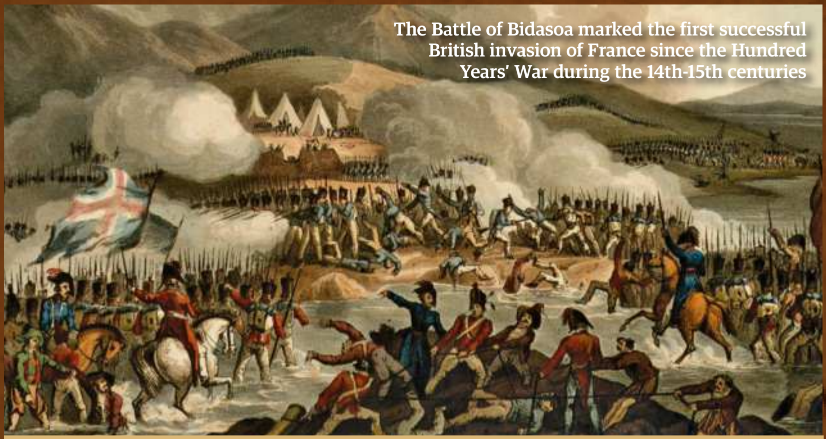


BATTLE OF VITORIA

Wellington defeated Joseph Bonaparte at Vitoria after marching 121,000 British, Spanish and Portuguese troops from northern Portugal. The battle marked the collapse of Napoleonic rule in Spain.

Joseph Bonaparte escapes from Vitoria. The former king of Spain left behind 19 kilometres of carriages, baggage and treasure, which the British promptly looted

OCTOBER 1813

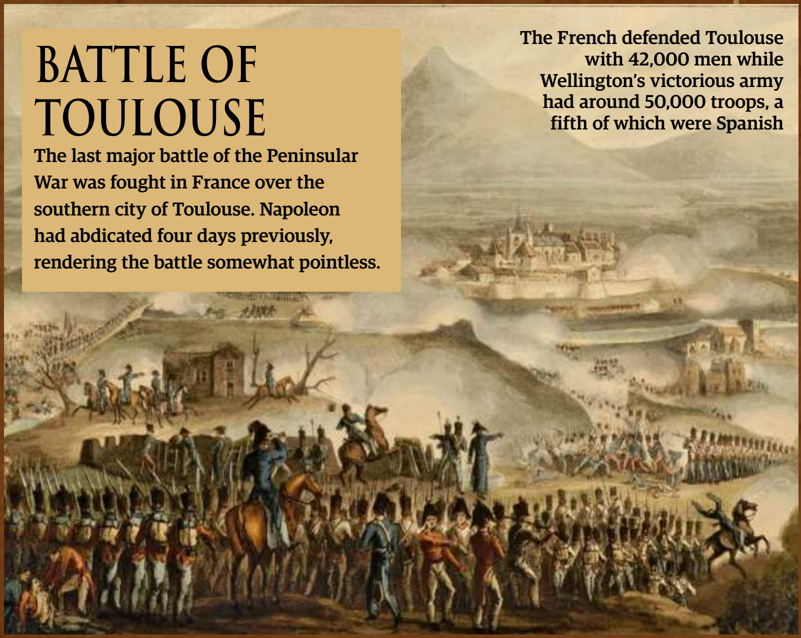


The Battle of Bidasoa marked the first successful British invasion of France since the Hundred Years' War during the 14th-15th centuries

WELLINGTON INVADES FRANCE

After Vitoria, Wellington fought a hard campaign to enter southern France with his army across the River Bidasoa. There was fierce fighting at Vera but the Allies crossed the river on 7 October 1813

APRIL 1814



BATTLE OF TOULOUSE

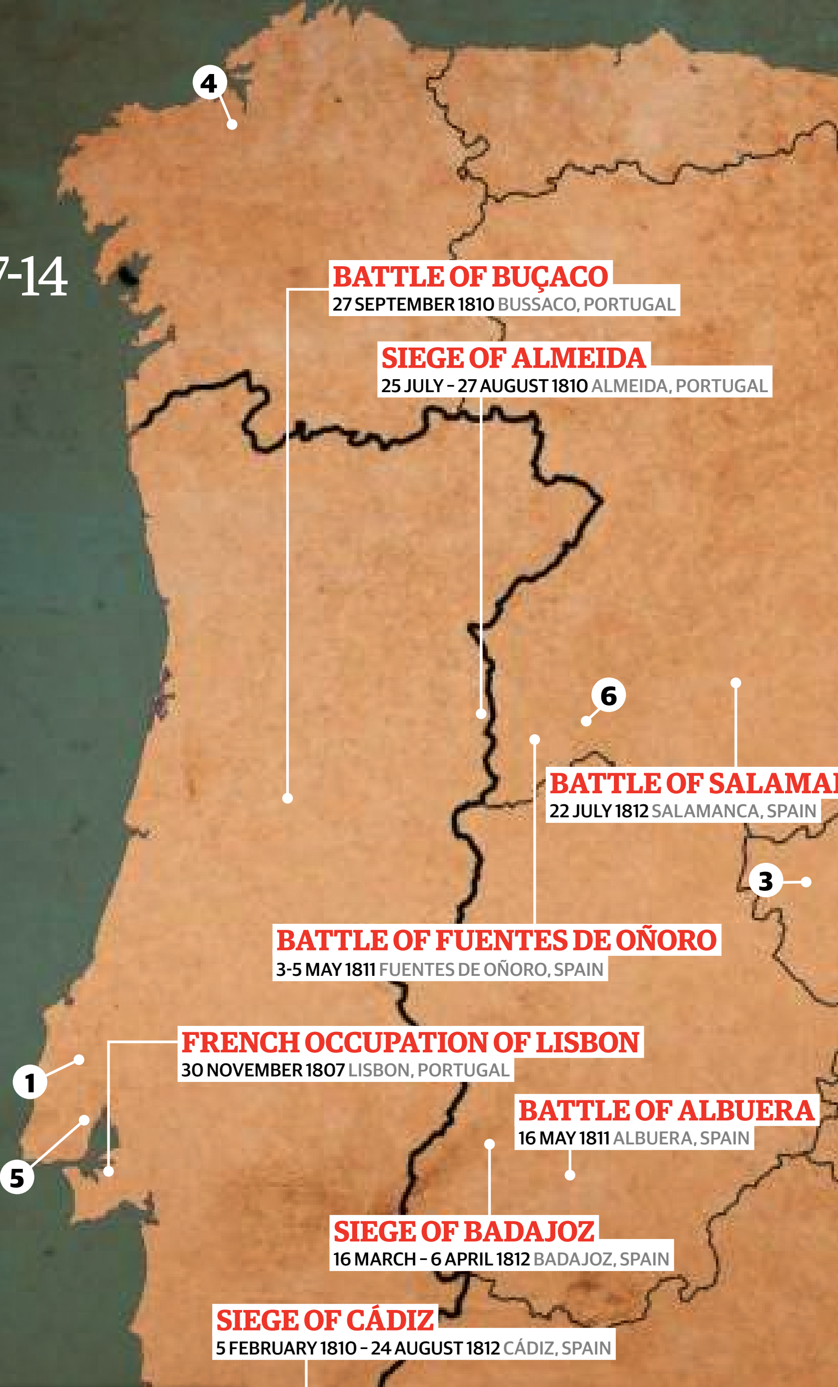
The last major battle of the Peninsular War was fought in France over the southern city of Toulouse. Napoleon had abdicated four days previously, rendering the battle somewhat pointless.

The French defended Toulouse with 42,000 men while Wellington's victorious army had around 50,000 troops, a fifth of which were Spanish

Images: Alamy

HOTSPOTS OF THE PENINSULA 1807-14

The fight for Iberia was an intense struggle fought across three countries and contained a myriad of bloody battles and sieges


4
BATTLE OF BUÇACO
27 SEPTEMBER 1810 BUSSACO, PORTUGAL
SIEGE OF ALMEIDA
25 JULY - 27 AUGUST 1810 ALMEIDA, PORTUGAL
6
BATTLE OF SALAMA
22 JULY 1812 SALAMANCA, SPAIN
3
BATTLE OF FUENTES DE OÑORO
3-5 MAY 1811 FUENTES DE OÑORO, SPAIN
FRENCH OCCUPATION OF LISBON
30 NOVEMBER 1807 LISBON, PORTUGAL
1
5
BATTLE OF ALBUERA
16 MAY 1811 ALBUERA, SPAIN
SIEGE OF BADAJOZ
16 MARCH - 6 APRIL 1812 BADAJOZ, SPAIN
SIEGE OF CÁDIZ
5 FEBRUARY 1810 - 24 AUGUST 1812 CÁDIZ, SPAIN
BATTLE OF BAROSSA
5 MARCH 1811 PLAYA DE BAROSSA, SPAIN

1 BATTLE OF VIMEIRO

VIMEIRO, PORTUGAL 21 AUGUST 1808

General Junot attacks Wellington's army in a classic French column formation. The British, fighting in lines, beat off Junot's troops who lose 2,000 men and 13 cannon.

2 SECOND SIEGE OF ZARAGOZA

ZARAGOZA, SPAIN 20 DECEMBER 1808 - 20 FEBRUARY 1809

The French capture the city from the Spanish in a bloody battle that becomes noted for its brutality. An estimated 54,000 Spaniards, both soldiers and civilians, are killed through disease and street fighting.

3 BATTLE OF TALAVERA

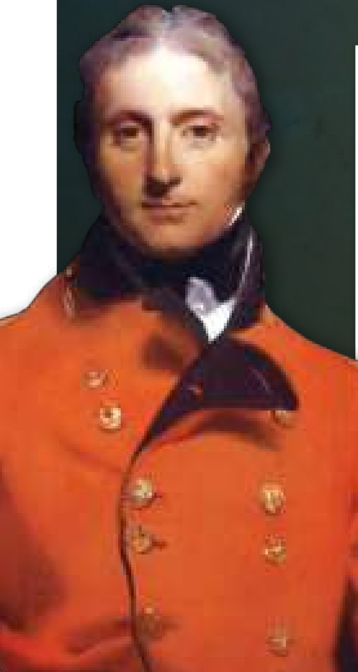
TALAVERA, SPAIN 27-28 JULY 1809

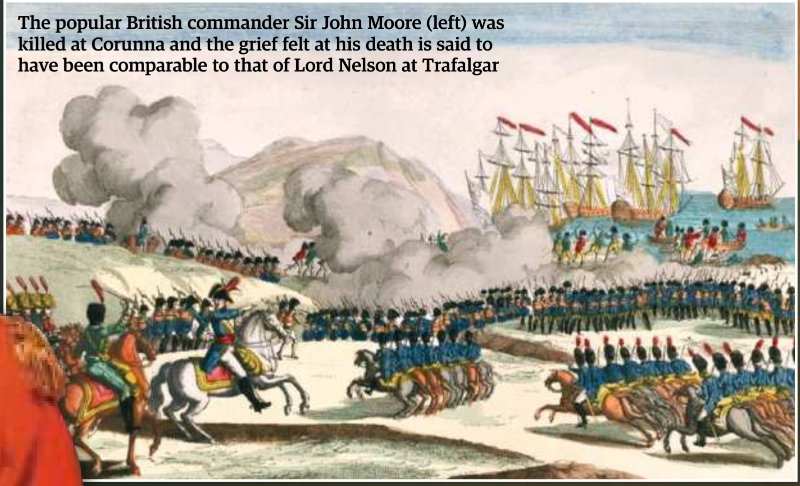
Wellington commands 55,000 men, but 35,000 are uncooperative Spaniards who largely flee in front of a French force of 46,000. The British take the brunt of the fighting and the French are eventually defeated by artillery fire.

4 BATTLE OF CORUNNA

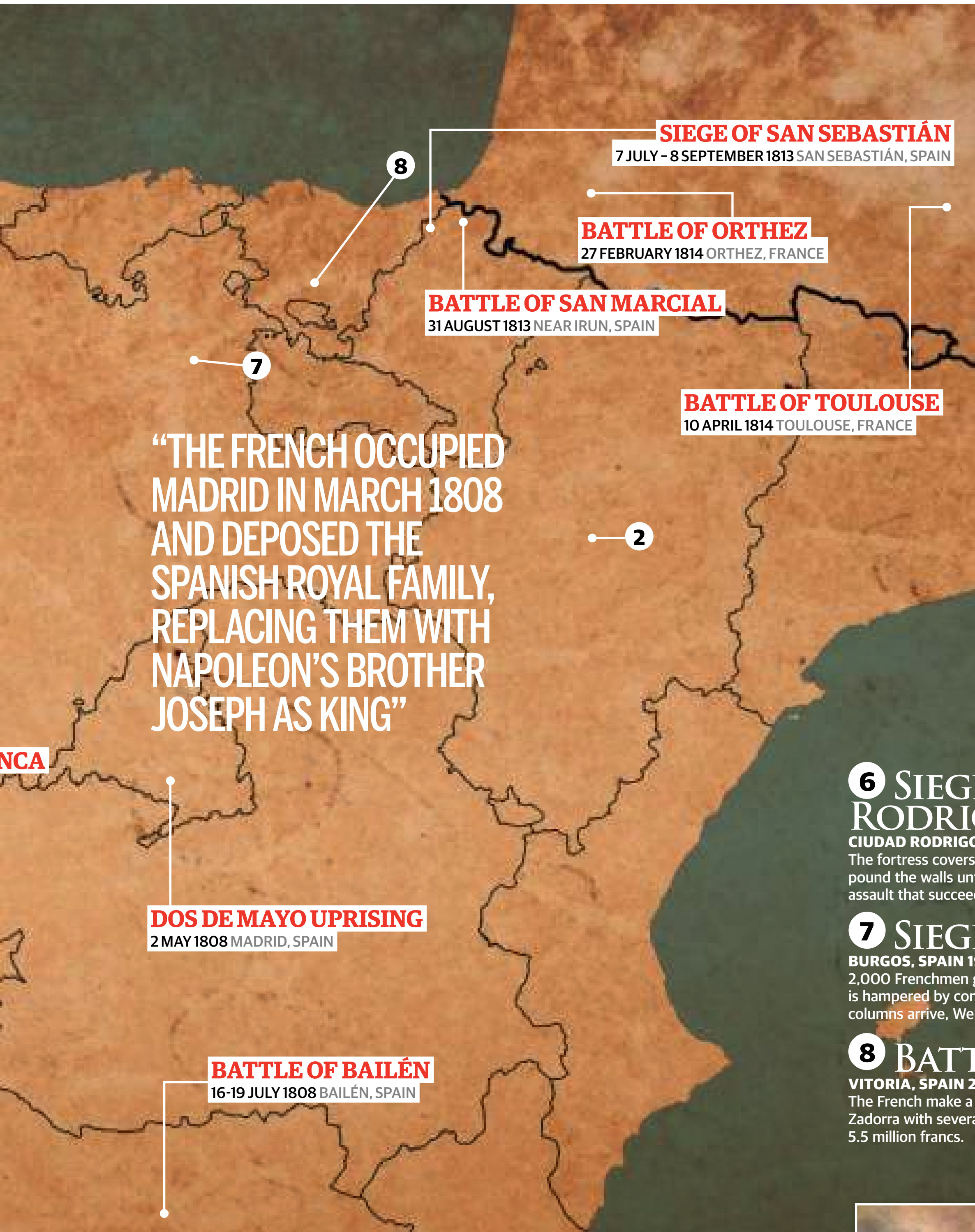
CORUNNA, SPAIN 16 JANUARY 1809

Arguably a Napoleonic Dunkirk, Corunna is a successful naval evacuation of some 27,000 British troops from Spain. Hotly pursued by a numerically superior French army, the victorious defensive battle secures a British escape.





The popular British commander Sir John Moore (left) was killed at Corunna and the grief felt at his death is said to have been comparable to that of Lord Nelson at Trafalgar



SIEGE OF SAN SEBASTIÁN
7 JULY - 8 SEPTEMBER 1813 SAN SEBASTIÁN, SPAIN

BATTLE OF ORTHEZ
27 FEBRUARY 1814 ORTHEZ, FRANCE

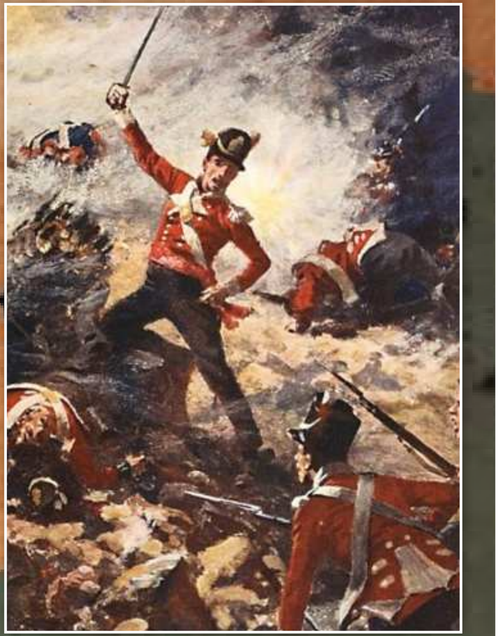
BATTLE OF SAN MARCIAL
31 AUGUST 1813 NEAR IRUN, SPAIN

BATTLE OF TOULOUSE
10 APRIL 1814 TOULOUSE, FRANCE

DOS DE MAYO UPRISING
2 MAY 1808 MADRID, SPAIN

BATTLE OF BAILÉN
16-19 JULY 1808 BAILÉN, SPAIN

> "THE FRENCH OCCUPIED MADRID IN MARCH 1808 AND DEPOSED THE SPANISH ROYAL FAMILY, REPLACING THEM WITH NAPOLEON'S BROTHER JOSEPH AS KING"



Colin Campbell leading a 'forlorn hope' at the Siege of San Sebastián. Then aged 21, Campbell later became a field marshal

6 SIEGE OF CIUDAD RODRIGO

CIUDAD RODRIGO, SPAIN 7-20 JANUARY 1812
The fortress covers the northern gateway from Portugal to Spain. The British pound the walls until two breaches are created. Wellington then orders an assault that succeeds at great cost.

7 SIEGE OF BURGOS

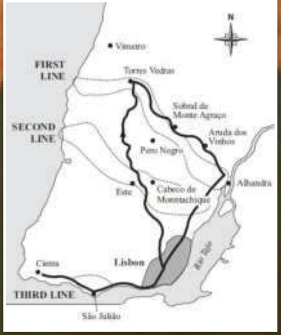
BURGOS, SPAIN 19 SEPTEMBER - 21 OCTOBER 1812
2,000 Frenchmen garrison the Castilian capital. Wellington's besieging force is hampered by continual rainfall and a lack of artillery. When French relief columns arrive, Wellington withdraws.

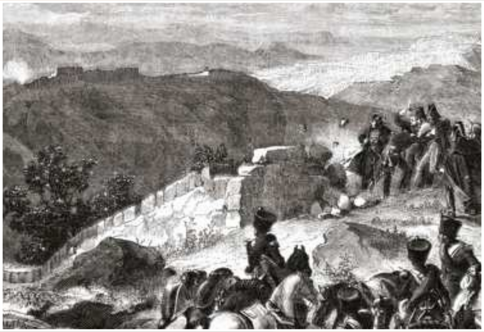
8 BATTLE OF VITORIA

VITORIA, SPAIN 21 JUNE 1813
The French make a series of errors that allow Wellington to cross the River Zadorra with several divisions. In the chaos, the British take treasure worth 5.5 million francs.

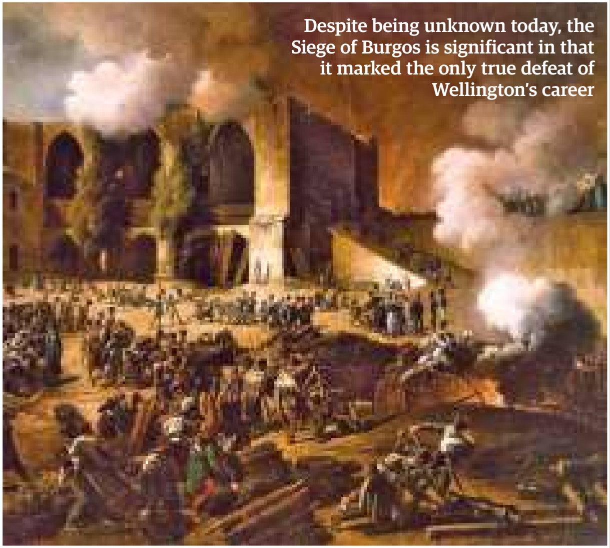
5 LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS

LISBON, PORTUGAL 1810-11
Built to defend Lisbon from land attacks, the British defensive lines stretch from the Atlantic coast to the impassable River Tagus. 25,000 troops, 100 redoubts and 450 cannon successfully protect the Portuguese capital.





Left: Marshal Masséna before the lines. The French realised they were impenetrable and Portugal was saved from invasion



Despite being unknown today, the Siege of Burgos is significant in that it marked the only true defeat of Wellington's career

Images: Alamy

KEY BATTLE: SALAMANCA

Wellington was confirmed as a military genius on 22 July 1812 with this decisive victory that signalled the end of French domination in Spain

In early 1812, Wellington captured the French strongholds of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz near the Spanish-Portuguese border. He advanced his allied British, Spanish and Portuguese armies of 49,000 men into Spain and made for Madrid. Confronting him were 50,000 French troops commanded by Marshal Marmont.

Wellington held the advantage as Marmont's forces were strung out in an arc stretching from Oviedo in the north, to Avila near Madrid. In the middle of this arc was the city of Salamanca. From 17 June 1812, the two armies shadowed each other warily around the city for a month. Finally on 22 July, Marmont attempted to outflank Wellington but overstretched his forces. Upon hearing this Wellington declared, "Marmont is lost" and rode to battle.

"WELLINGTON WON A DECISIVE VICTORY AT SALAMANCA, MARKING HIM OUT AS A TRUE RIVAL TO NAPOLEON"

1. THE FRENCH COMMANDER IS SLAIN

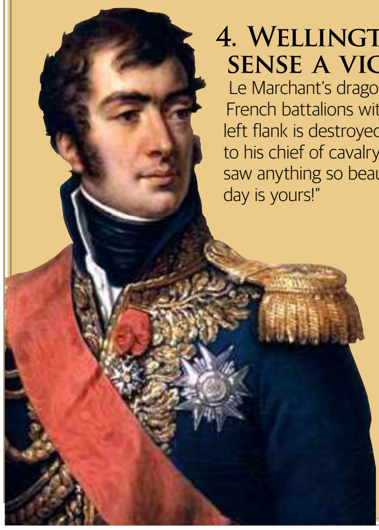
Marshal Marmont realises he has overextended the left of his army but is severely wounded by a howitzer shell before he can alert General Thomières, who commands the left flank. General Bonnet replaces Marmont.

2. PAKENHAM ATTACKS THOMIÈRES

Wellington's brother-in-law, Adjutant-General Pakenham is ordered to attack Thomières with the 3rd Division of British infantry. Despite heavy fire from the French, Pakenham smashes through Thomières's men inflicting having casualties, including Thomières himself who is killed.

3. THE HEAVY CAVALRY CHARGE

General Maucune's division is attacked. He orders his infantrymen to form squares. This is a costly mistake as they are destroyed by British line infantry and a cavalry charge led by Major General Le Marchant. However, Le Marchant is mortally wounded.



Marmont was forced to retire to France after the battle to recover his strength

4. WELLINGTON CAN SENSE A VICTORY

Le Marchant's dragoons crush eight French battalions with sabres. The entire left flank is destroyed. Wellington exclaims to his chief of cavalry, "My God! I never saw anything so beautiful in all my life. The day is yours!"

5. ATTACKING THE FRENCH CENTRE

Major General Cole's 4th Division and General Pack's Portuguese brigade are repulsed trying to take the Greater Arapile hill where the French centre, led by General Bonnet, is positioned. 40 gun batteries firing on the hill assist the French.

6. CLAUSEL FIGHTS BACK

Bonnet is severely wounded and is replaced by General Clausel who orders a counterattack against Cole. However, Wellington commits his reserves of 5,500 men under Major General Clinton's 6th Division. Meanwhile, Marshal Beresford leads his Portuguese brigade against Clausel's left flank.

7. FIGHTING AT DUSK

As night falls, Clausel is pushed back. Major-General Campbell's 1st Division captures the Greater Arapile and Wellington throws the fresh 12th Light Dragoons into battle to pursue the retreating French.

8. FERREY'S LAST STAND

Covering the retreat, General Ferrey forms his right-flank division into a single line. Clinton's 6th Division is initially repulsed but Wellington orders his artillery to crossfire through the centre of Ferrey's line. Ferrey is killed and his division is broken.

9. FLIGHT TO ALBA DE TORMES

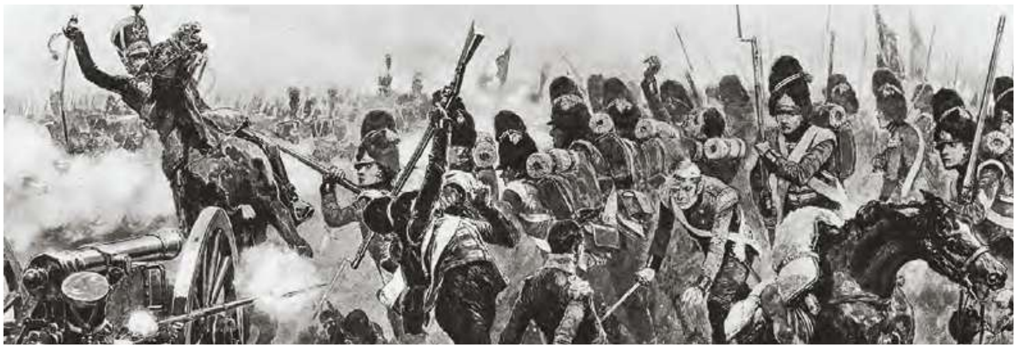
The French retreat across a bridge at Alba de Tormes in disorder. The Spanish battalion guarding the crossings have left their positions without informing Wellington and the remnants of Marmont's army are able to escape. This greatly angers Wellington.

10. A SWIFT VICTORY

In only four hours, the French forces have lost more than 14,000 men to just more than 5,000 Allied casualties. It is a remarkable success for Wellington who remarks, "I never saw an army get such a beating in so short a time."

THE IMPACT OF SALAMANCA

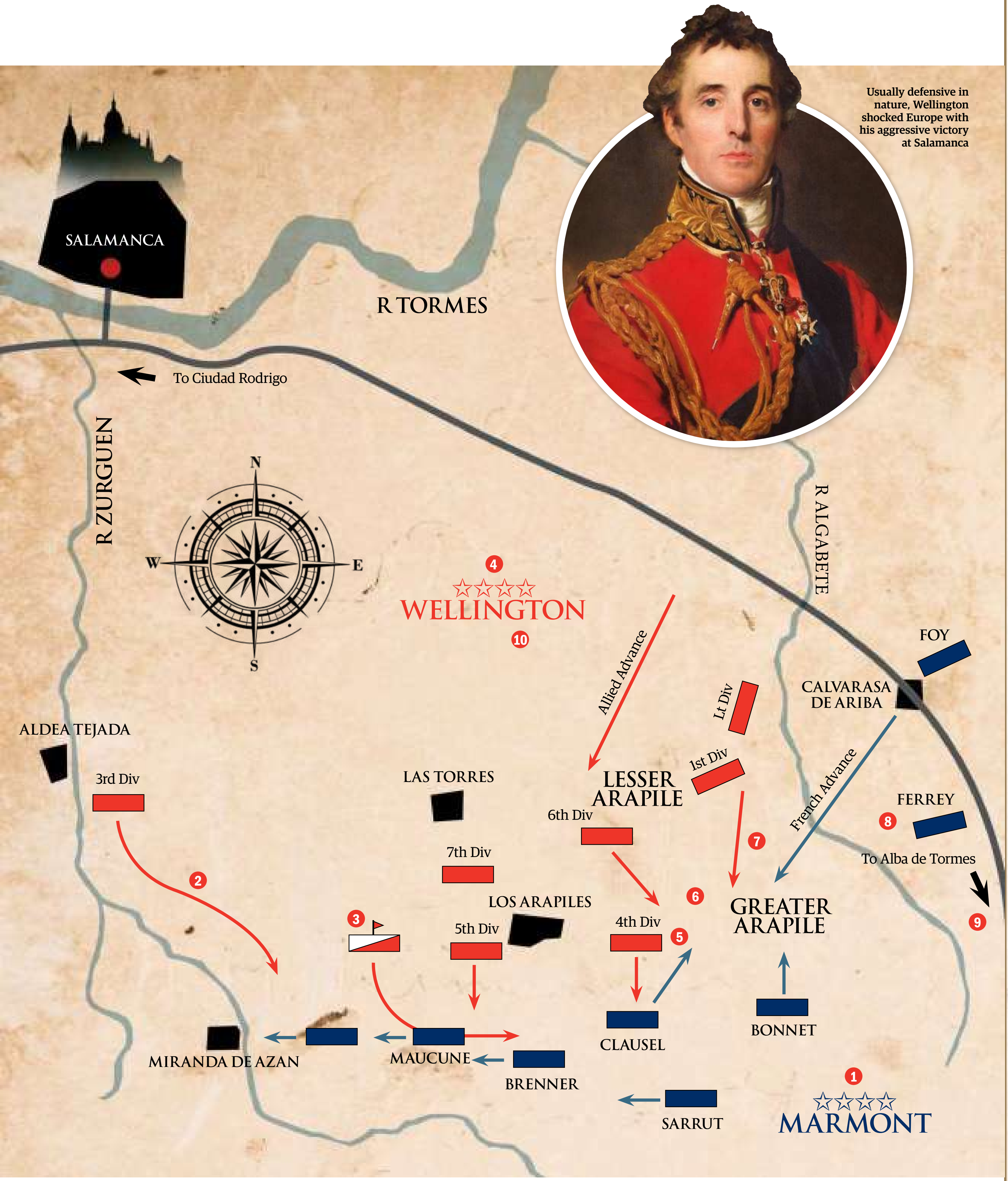
Wellington had achieved one of his greatest military successes to date, and the victory resonated far beyond the Iberian Peninsula



For the first time in his career, the usually cautious Wellington had won a decisive victory at Salamanca by taking the offensive. This marked him out as a true rival to Napoleon. Indeed, the French General Foy wrote that Salamanca rose Wellington's reputation "almost to the level of Marlborough" and was "a battle in the style of Frederick the Great."

After the battle, Wellington was able to enter Madrid on 6 August, although he was forced to retreat to Portugal in the autumn. Nonetheless, from that point on the French were reluctant to take the offensive against the Allied armies in Spain and this - combined with a severe loss in manpower and resources - led to their ultimate expulsion from the Peninsula. Salamanca also had a propaganda impact across Europe and gave heart to those who were committed to defeating the French Empire.

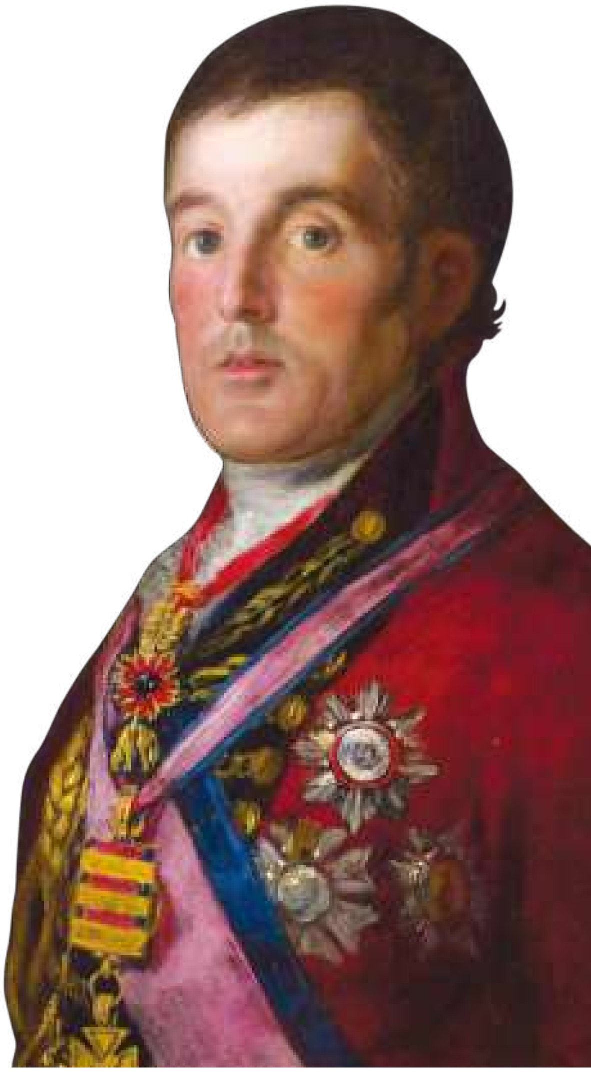
When Napoleon heard about the defeat on 2 September, during his invasion of Russia, one of his generals noticed that "anxiety was clearly visible on his usually serene brow." The news did nothing for the Grande Armée's already depleted morale, just five days before the apocalyptic Battle of Borodino.


SALAMANCA
R TORMES
To Ciudad Rodrigo
R ZURGUEN
N
W
E
S
4
☆☆☆☆
WELLINGTON
10
R ALGABETE
FOY
CALVARASA DE ARIBA
Allied Advance
Lt Div
1st Div
French Advance
ALDEA TEJADA
3rd Div
LAS TORRES
LESSER ARAPILE
6th Div
FERREY
8
7
To Alba de Tormes
7th Div
2
LOS ARAPILES
6
GREATER ARAPILE
9
3
5th Div
4th Div
5
MIRANDA DE AZAN
MAUCUNE
CLAUSEL
BONNET
BRENNER
1
☆☆☆☆
MARMONT
SARRUT

Usually defensive in nature, Wellington shocked Europe with his aggressive victory at Salamanca

HEROES & COMMANDERS

The Peninsular War's multiple combatants resulted in a multinational melting pot of commanding personalities with tales of courage, co-operation, disappointment and even theft



ARTHUR WELLESLEY

IBERIA TRANSFORMED THIS BRITISH SOLDIER FROM A GENERAL INTO A DUKE

YEARS: 1769-1852 **COUNTRY:** GREAT BRITAIN

Above all others, it was the efforts of Arthur Wellesley that ensured an Allied victory over the French in Iberia. Britain's involvement in the peninsula originated in its ancient alliance with Portugal and its implacable hostility to France. Despite these important reasons for intervention, the British never had a large army in the region and their famous success in the war was mostly because of Wellesley's leadership.

Having earned his military reputation in India, Wellesley first arrived in Portugal in 1808 as a lieutenant general and defeated the French at Vimeiro. This initial victory forced the French to retreat into Spain, but Wellesley was temporarily replaced for reluctantly allowing the enemy to leave the country in British ships. In his absence, the British had to evacuate their army from Spain after Napoleon arrived with hundreds of thousands of troops and their commander, Sir John Moore, was killed. This led to Wellesley resuming his command of British forces in Portugal in 1809. From this time, he fought a slow, difficult, but successful campaign.

Despite constantly being outnumbered and short of resources, Wellesley won a gradual string of victories that have since become famous, including Talavera, Salamanca and Vitoria to name but a few. Many of these successes were extremely hard-fought, such as the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, but they always resulted in forcing the French to either give ground or rethink their strategy. By 1813, Wellesley ejected Napoleon's troops from Iberia and had ended the war on French territory at Toulouse.

The key to Wellesley's success was his clever use of terrain, logistics, intelligence and discipline. He also did his best to stop the worst excesses of his soldiers against the local population, though he was not always successful. Ultimately, he described his strategy as forward-looking, "I made my campaigns of ropes. If anything went wrong, I

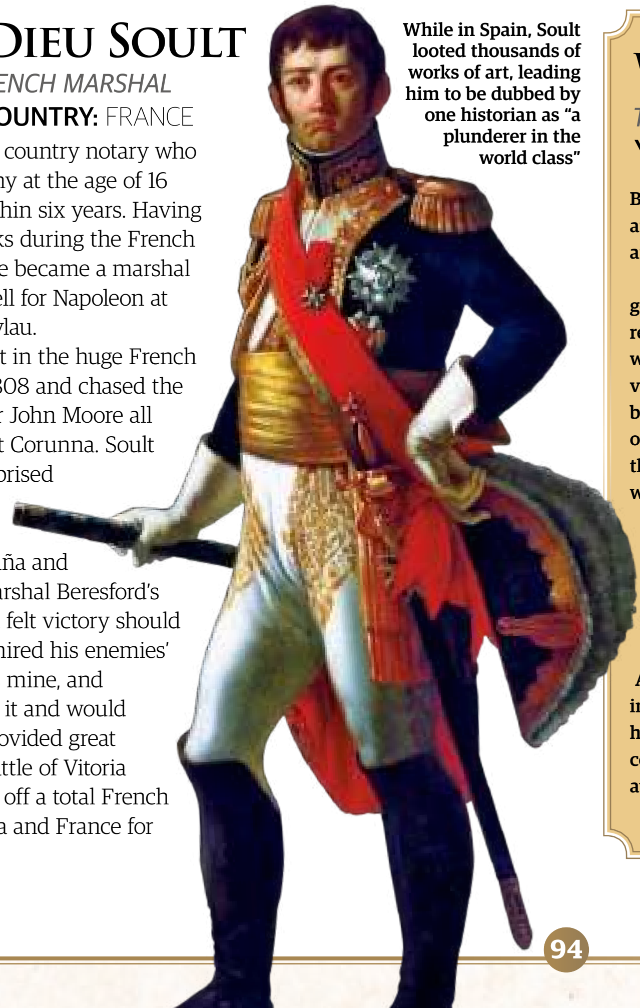
JEAN-DE-DIEU SOULT

THE STUBBORN FRENCH MARSHAL

YEARS: 1769-1851 **COUNTRY:** FRANCE

Soult was the son of a country notary who joined the French Army at the age of 16 and was an officer within six years. Having risen through the ranks during the French Revolutionary Wars, he became a marshal in 1804 and fought well for Napoleon at Austerlitz, Jena and Eylau.

He took a major part in the huge French invasion of Spain in 1808 and chased the British Army under Sir John Moore all the way to the coast at Corunna. Soult was subsequently surprised by Wellington at Porto, but he defeated a Spanish army at Ocaña and then badly mauled Marshal Beresford's army at Albuera. Soult felt victory should have been his but admired his enemies' courage, "The day was mine, and yet they did not know it and would not run." Soult later provided great leadership after the Battle of Vitoria and managed to stave off a total French defeat in the Peninsula and France for almost a year.



While in Spain, Soult looted thousands of works of art, leading him to be dubbed by one historian as "a plunderer in the world class"

WILLIAM BERESFORD

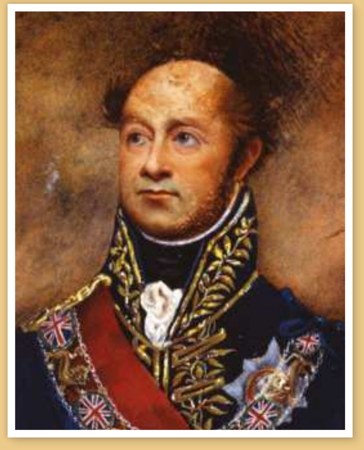
THE BRITISH COMMANDER OF THE PORTUGUESE ARMY

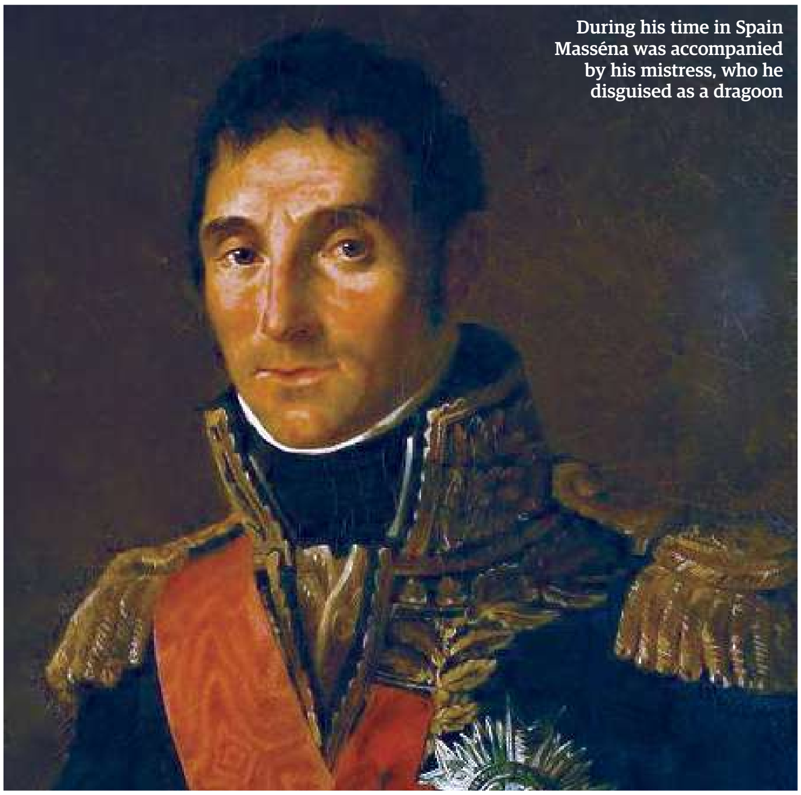
YEARS: 1768-1854 **COUNTRY:** GREAT BRITAIN, PORTUGAL

Beresford held a unique position during the Peninsular War. Although he was an Anglo-Irish officer in the British Army, he developed affection for Portugal and helped to restore the country's confidence following the French occupation.

After governing Madeira for the king of Portugal, the exiled Portuguese government realised they needed a commander-in-chief to retrain and reinvigorate their demoralised army. Wellington recommended Beresford who was made a marshal in 1809. Beresford removed corrupt officers and used vigorous discipline to produce a small but effective army that was trained on British lines. His reforms proved themselves at the Battle of Buçaco when Portuguese troops greatly aided the outnumbered British troops to produce a victory.

Beresford now commanded a multinational corps in Wellington's army numbering 30,000 men, but barely scraped a bloody victory at Albuera. Afterwards, his career went into decline as a field commander but he remained Wellington's second-in-command and played an important role at the Battle of Toulouse.





During his time in Spain Masséna was accompanied by his mistress, who he disguised as a dragoon

ANDRÉ MASSÉNA

THE COMMANDER WHO WAS BROKEN BY THE PENINSULA

YEARS: 1758-1817 **COUNTRY:** FRANCE

Masséna had originally joined the French Army and risen to the rank of warrant officer, before he was discharged in 1789. Following two years as a smuggler, he was voted back in the army and by 1793, he was a general.

The rising star fought with great distinction during Napoleon's Italian campaigns and contributed to many French victories. He was made a marshal in 1804 and again proved his worth in the 1809-war against the Fifth Coalition, but he became unstuck when he was posted to Spain in 1810.

Masséna initially did well by conducting successful sieges at Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida but he then lost the Battle of Buçaco, before halting his invading army at Wellington's formidable border defences at the Lines of Torres Vedras. Masséna retreated into Spain where he was again defeated at Fuentes de Oñoro and was then recalled by a disappointed emperor.

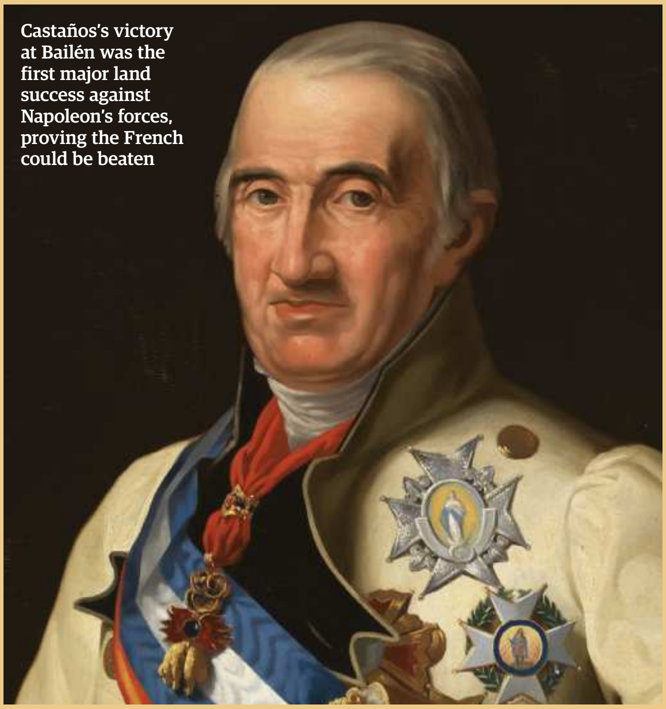
FRANCISCO JAVIER CASTAÑOS

THE UNSUNG VICTOR OF A MAJOR SPANISH VICTORY

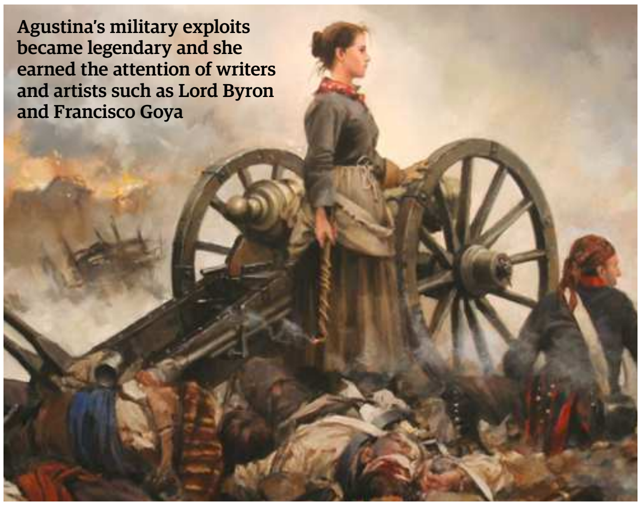
YEARS: 1758-1852 **COUNTRY:** SPAIN

Castaños was a dignified and intelligent general who won the first great Spanish victory against the French in 1808. After crushing a major revolt in Madrid in May, the French dispatched columns to crush what were believed to be isolated rebellions, including the main army of 20,000 men under General Pierre Dupont. Castaños's force outnumbered the French but his soldiers were inexperienced and untested. Nevertheless, Dupont made the grave error of spreading his men out along too thin a line along the River Guadalquivir. Castaños split his own force into three and attacked the French in separate locations.

Over three days, from 16-19 July 1808, the two sides fought each other until the Spanish attacked the rear of the French and forced them to capitulate at Bailén. Almost 18,000 French troops surrendered and the battle encouraged Napoleon's enemies across Europe. Castaños himself continued to fight throughout the war and was valued by Wellington for his reliability.



Castaños's victory at Bailén was the first major land success against Napoleon's forces, proving the French could be beaten



Agustina's military exploits became legendary and she earned the attention of writers and artists such as Lord Byron and Francisco Goya

AGUSTINA DE ARAGÓN

THE DEFIANT DEFENDER OF ZARAGOZA KNOWN AS THE 'SPANISH JOAN OF ARC'

YEARS: 1786-1857 **COUNTRY:** SPAIN

Born as Agustina Raimunda María Saragossa Domènech, this heroine of the Peninsular War became a famous symbol of Spanish resistance against the French invaders.

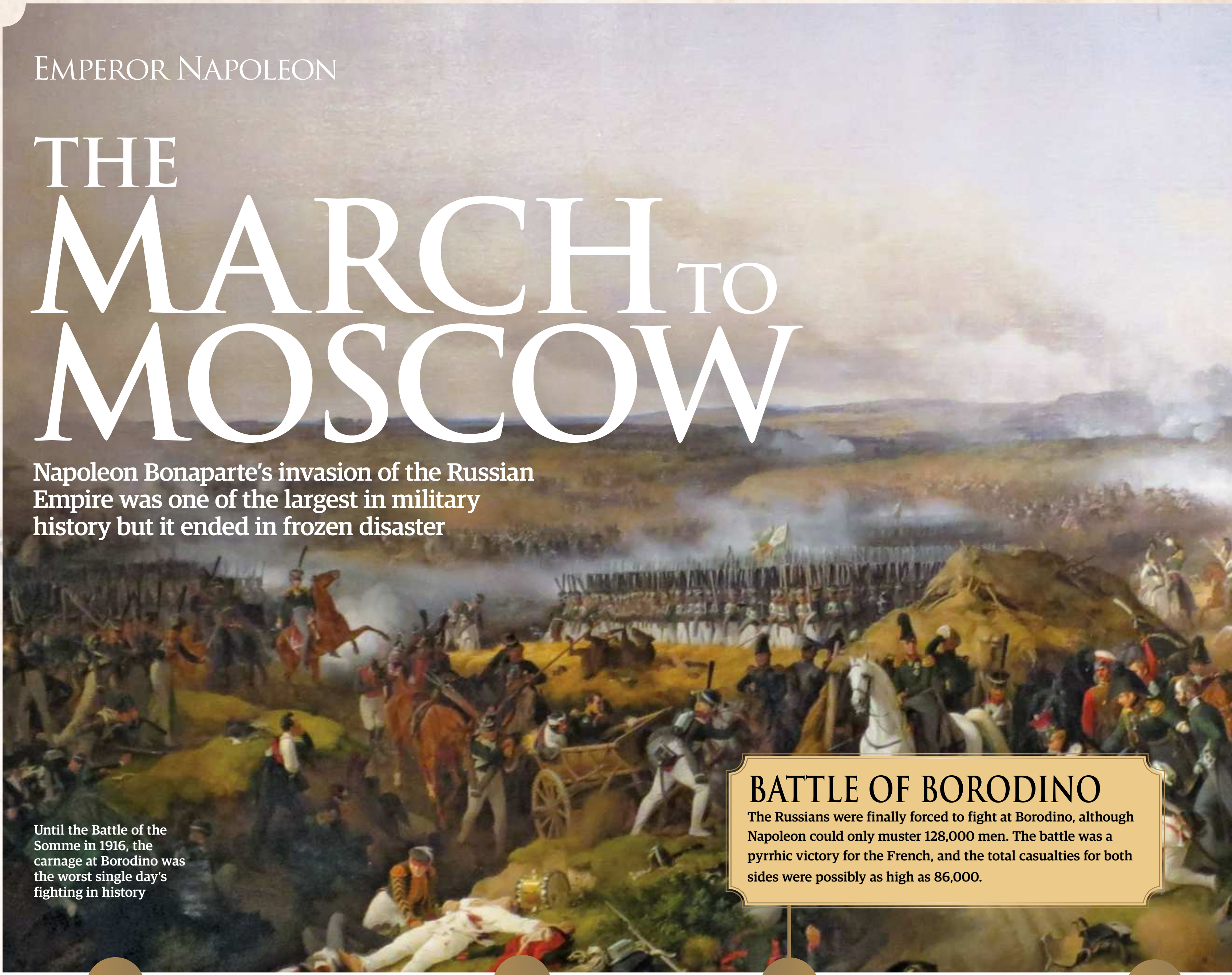
Agustina was the wife of a Spanish soldier and found herself trapped in the besieged city of Zaragoza in 1808 at a time when most Spanish cities had already capitulated. Despite the fact that they were vastly outgunned the Zaragozans put up a spirited defence, during which Agustina performed her most famous action.

On 15 June 1808, the French stormed the main gateway as Agustina was feeding defenders on the ramparts. Although she witnessed defenders breaking ranks and being bayoneted by the French, Agustina ran forward, loaded a cannon and fired it at point-blank range, rallying the Spaniards.

The French eventually took Zaragoza but Agustina escaped and joined Wellington's army. She is said to have obtained the rank of captain, the only woman ever to do so during the conflict.

THE MARCH TO MOSCOW

Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of the Russian Empire was one of the largest in military history but it ended in frozen disaster

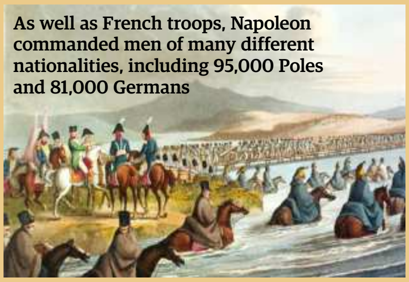


Until the Battle of the Somme in 1916, the carnage at Borodino was the worst single day's fighting in history

JUNE 1812

CROSSING THE NIEMEN

Emperor Napoleon I's Grande Armée of 450,000-600,000 men crossed the River Niemen into Russian territory, but by September hundreds of thousands of men had already died due to the already harsh campaigning conditions.

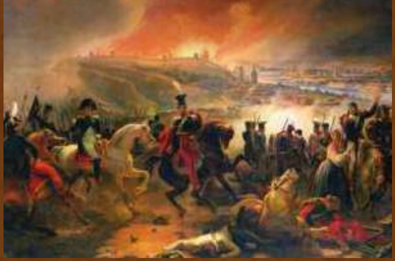


As well as French troops, Napoleon commanded men of many different nationalities, including 95,000 Poles and 81,000 Germans

16-18 AUGUST 1812

BATTLE OF SMOLENSK

Napoleon attempted an ambitious manoeuvre to force the Russian Army into a pitched battle, but the result was a costly attack on the walls of Smolensk. The Russians eventually evacuated the city.



Napoleon before a burning Smolensk. Although the Grande Armée captured the city, the Russians were able to slip away

7 SEPTEMBER 1812

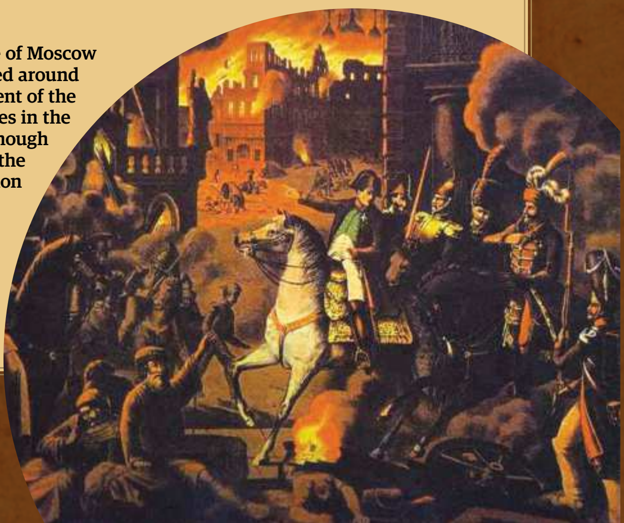
BATTLE OF BORODINO

The Russians were finally forced to fight at Borodino, although Napoleon could only muster 128,000 men. The battle was a pyrrhic victory for the French, and the total casualties for both sides were possibly as high as 86,000.

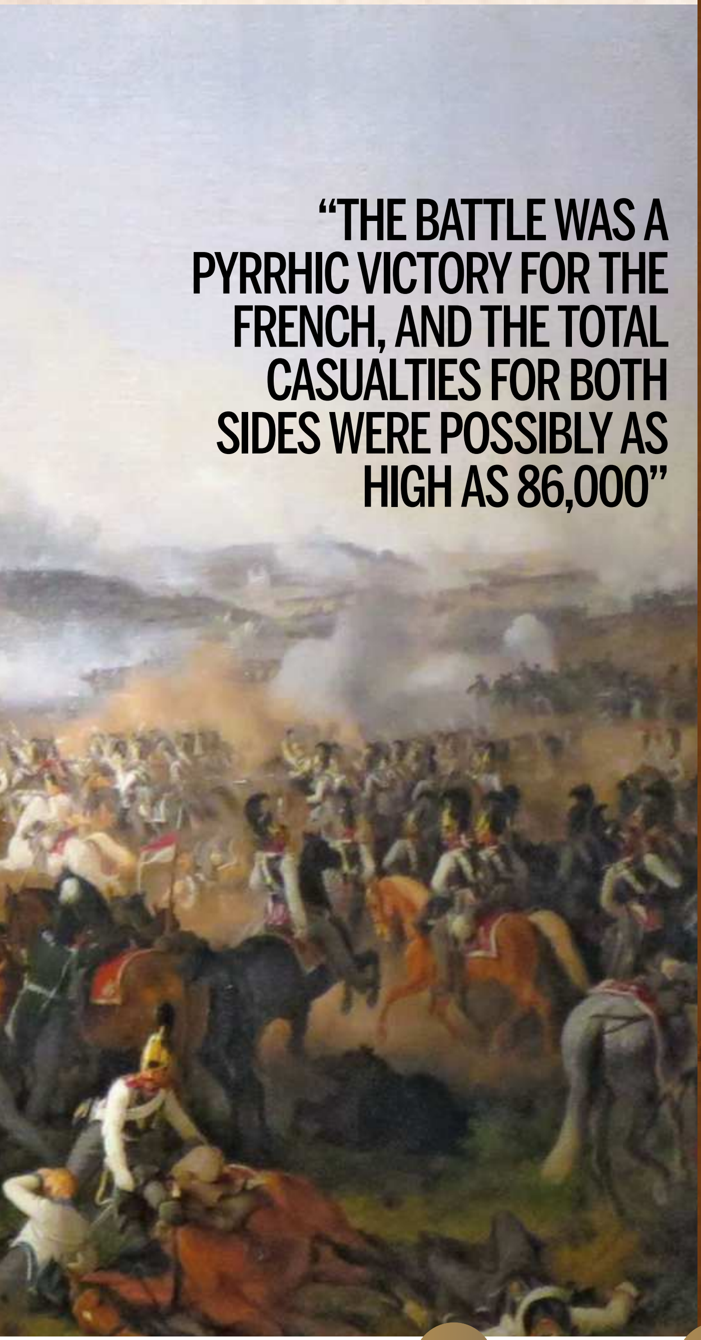
14 SEPTEMBER-19 OCTOBER 1812

CAPTURE AND FIRE OF MOSCOW

After Borodino, Napoleon occupied Moscow but the Russians deserted and then burned their ancient capital to deny the Grande Armée shelter, supplies and a glorious victory. Morale plummeted among the emperor's troops.



The Fire of Moscow destroyed around 75 per cent of the properties in the city. Although most of the population had left, at least 12,000 people died

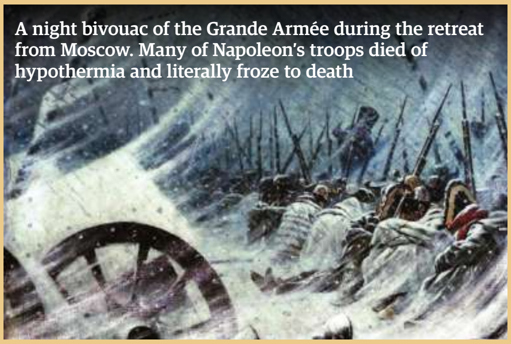


“THE BATTLE WAS A PYRRHIC VICTORY FOR THE FRENCH, AND THE TOTAL CASUALTIES FOR BOTH SIDES WERE POSSIBLY AS HIGH AS 86,000”

October-December 1812

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

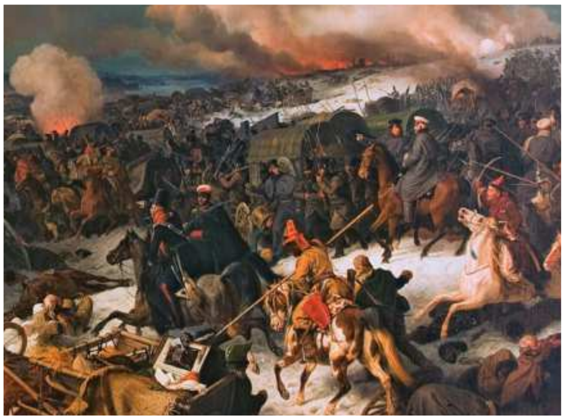
The Grande Armée retreated from Moscow and took the road back to friendly territory via Borodino but discipline largely collapsed. Thousands notoriously died of malnutrition and the extreme cold of the Russian winter.



A night bivouac of the Grande Armée during the retreat from Moscow. Many of Napoleon's troops died of hypothermia and literally froze to death

26-29 November 1812

BATTLE OF VITORIA



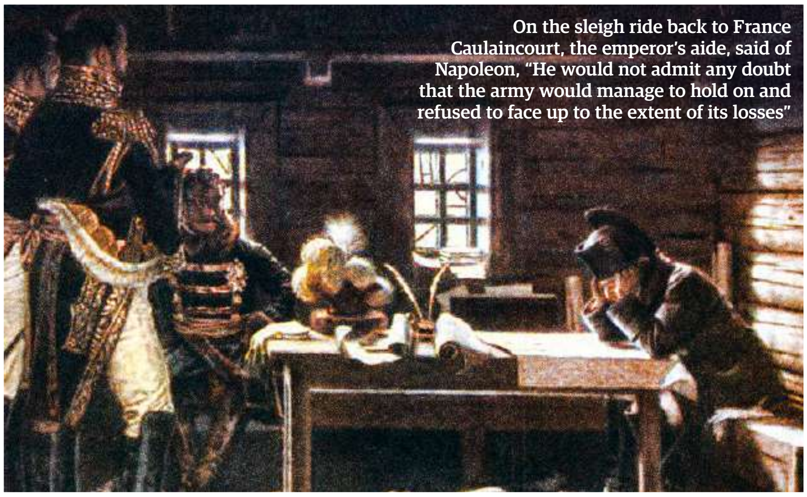
Wellington defeated Joseph Bonaparte at Vitoria after marching 121,000 British, Spanish and Portuguese troops from northern Portugal. The battle marked the collapse of Napoleonic rule in Spain.

Many members of the Grande Armée were able to cross the Berezina, but others refused to cross the bridges and thousands were massacred by Cossacks

5 December 1812

NAPOLEON LEAVES THE GRANDE ARMÉE

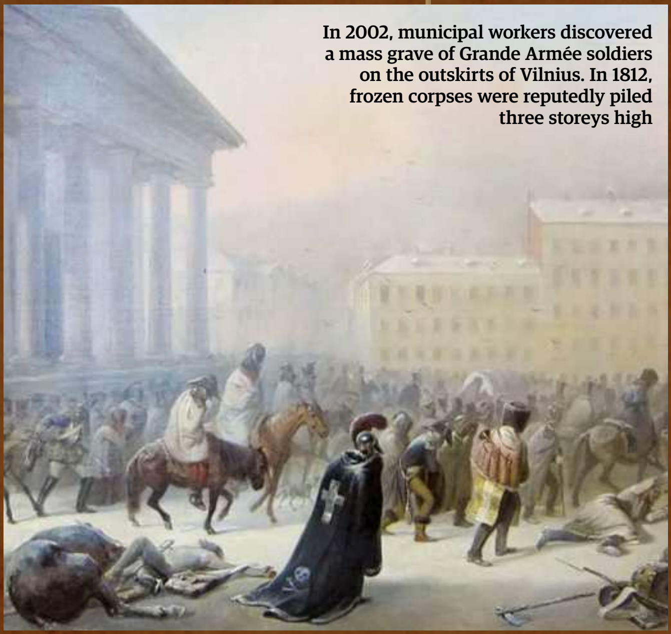
Shortly after Berezina, Napoleon left his own army to return to Paris and reassert control over central Europe by raising a new force to defeat the Russians. By now his troops were more concerned with survival than their emperor's departure.



On the sleigh ride back to France Caulaincourt, the emperor's aide, said of Napoleon, “He would not admit any doubt that the army would manage to hold on and refused to face up to the extent of its losses”

December 1812

ENDGAME AT VILNIUS



In 2002, municipal workers discovered a mass grave of Grande Armée soldiers on the outskirts of Vilnius. In 1812, frozen corpses were reputedly piled three storeys high

The pitiful remains of Napoleon's once feared force trudged into the nearest friendly outpost, which was the Lithuanian capital. However, the city could not cope with the frenzied troops. After a chaotic evacuation the Russians captured Vilnius.

Images: Alamy

PATH TO DESTRUCTION

How a civil engineer's ingenious map charted the Grande Armée's downfall

The French invasion of Russia formed the basis of the "best statistical graphic ever created" by civil engineer Charles Joseph Minard in 1869. The map represented the demise of Napoleon's troops using numbers, distance, locations, coordinates, direction of travel and, most significantly of all, temperature.

KEY

The size of Napoleon's army throughout the invasion campaign is represented by the width of the coloured zones

🟫 Soldiers who enter Russia

⬛ Soldiers who leave Russia

① BATTLE OF SALTANOVKA

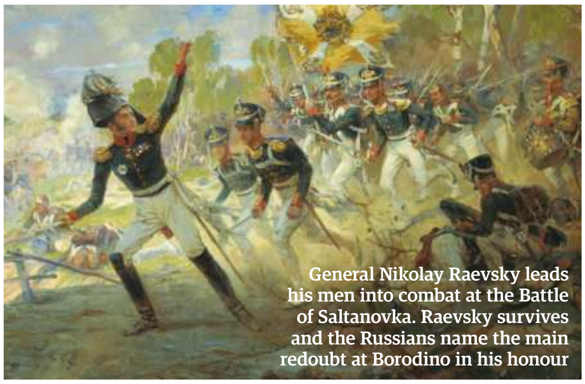
23 JULY 1812 NEAR MOGILEV, BELARUS

Saltanovka (also known as Mogilev) is the first significant fighting during the campaign. It is a minor French victory that prevents Bagration's 2nd Army from moving north to join Barclay de Tolly's 1st Army.

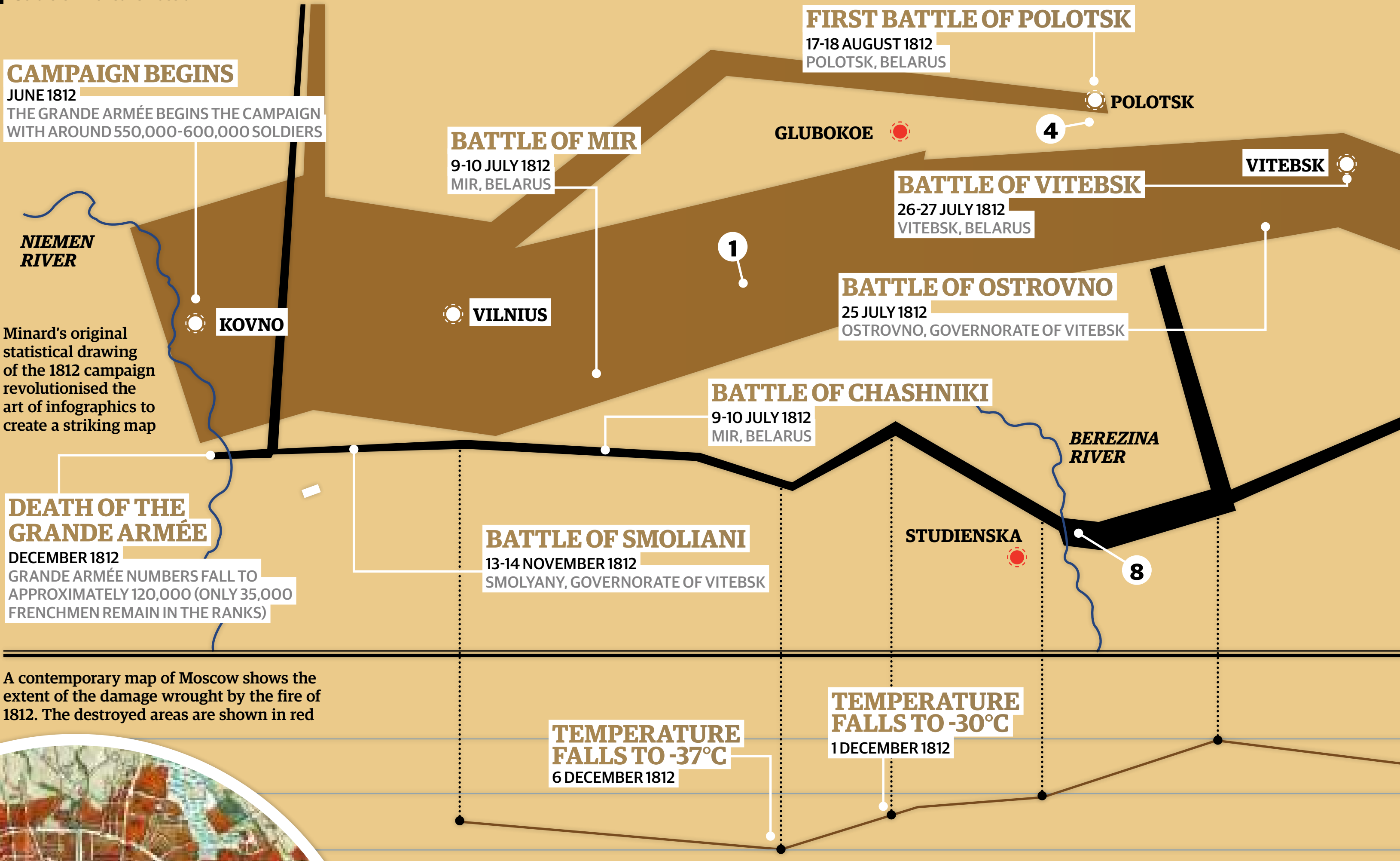
② BATTLE OF BORODINO

7 SEPTEMBER 1812 BORODINO, RUSSIA

Napoleon's poor performance here denies the Grande Armée a decisive victory and is one of the bloodiest battles in history. Despite their narrow defeat, the Russian impulse to defend their homeland intensifies.



General Nikolay Raevsky leads his men into combat at the Battle of Saltanovka. Raevsky survives and the Russians name the main redoubt at Borodino in his honour



CAMPAIGN BEGINS
JUNE 1812
THE GRANDE ARMÉE BEGINS THE CAMPAIGN WITH AROUND 550,000-600,000 SOLDIERS

BATTLE OF MIR
9-10 JULY 1812
MIR, BELARUS

FIRST BATTLE OF POLOTSK
17-18 AUGUST 1812
POLOTSK, BELARUS

BATTLE OF VITEBSK
26-27 JULY 1812
VITEBSK, BELARUS

BATTLE OF OSTROVNO
25 JULY 1812
OSTROVNO, GOVERNORATE OF VITEBSK

Minard's original statistical drawing of the 1812 campaign revolutionised the art of infographics to create a striking map

BATTLE OF CHASHNIKI
9-10 JULY 1812
MIR, BELARUS

DEATH OF THE GRANDE ARMÉE
DECEMBER 1812
GRANDE ARMÉE NUMBERS FALL TO APPROXIMATELY 120,000 (ONLY 35,000 FRENCHMEN REMAIN IN THE RANKS)

BATTLE OF SMOLIANI
13-14 NOVEMBER 1812
SMOLYANY, GOVERNORATE OF VITEBSK

TEMPERATURE FALLS TO -30°C
1 DECEMBER 1812

TEMPERATURE FALLS TO -37°C
6 DECEMBER 1812

A contemporary map of Moscow shows the extent of the damage wrought by the fire of 1812. The destroyed areas are shown in red

③ OCCUPATION OF MOSCOW

14 SEPTEMBER-19 OCTOBER 1812 MOSCOW, RUSSIA

Napoleon's pyrrhic capture of the ancient Russian capital witnesses an empty city, looting and a devastating fire. The French are sent the clearest message that there will be no negotiations.

④ SECOND BATTLE OF POLOTSK

18-20 OCTOBER 1812 POLOTSK, BELARUS

The Russians defeat General Laurent Saint-Cyr at Polotsk. This action destroys Napoleon's northern flank in Belarus and helps enable three Russian armies to eventually converge on the Grande Armée at the River Berezina.

5 BATTLE OF MALOYAROSLAVETS

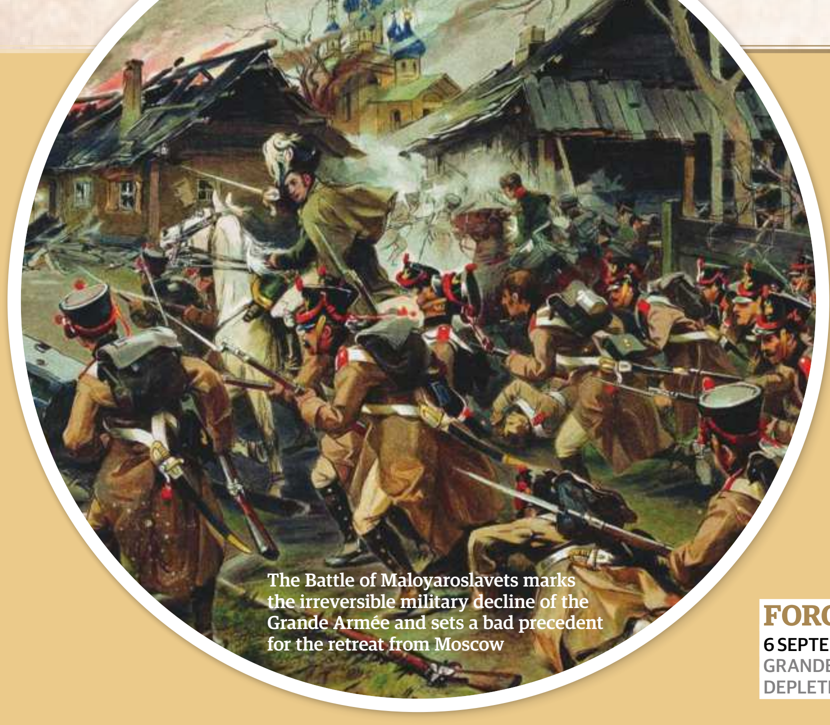
24 OCTOBER 1812 **MALOYAROSLAVETS, RUSSIA**

This important battle disrupts Napoleon's original plans for the retreat from Moscow. A vicious fight occurs at the town of Maloyaroslavets but the Russians are able to continue harassing the Grande Armée afterwards.

6 BATTLE OF VYAZMA

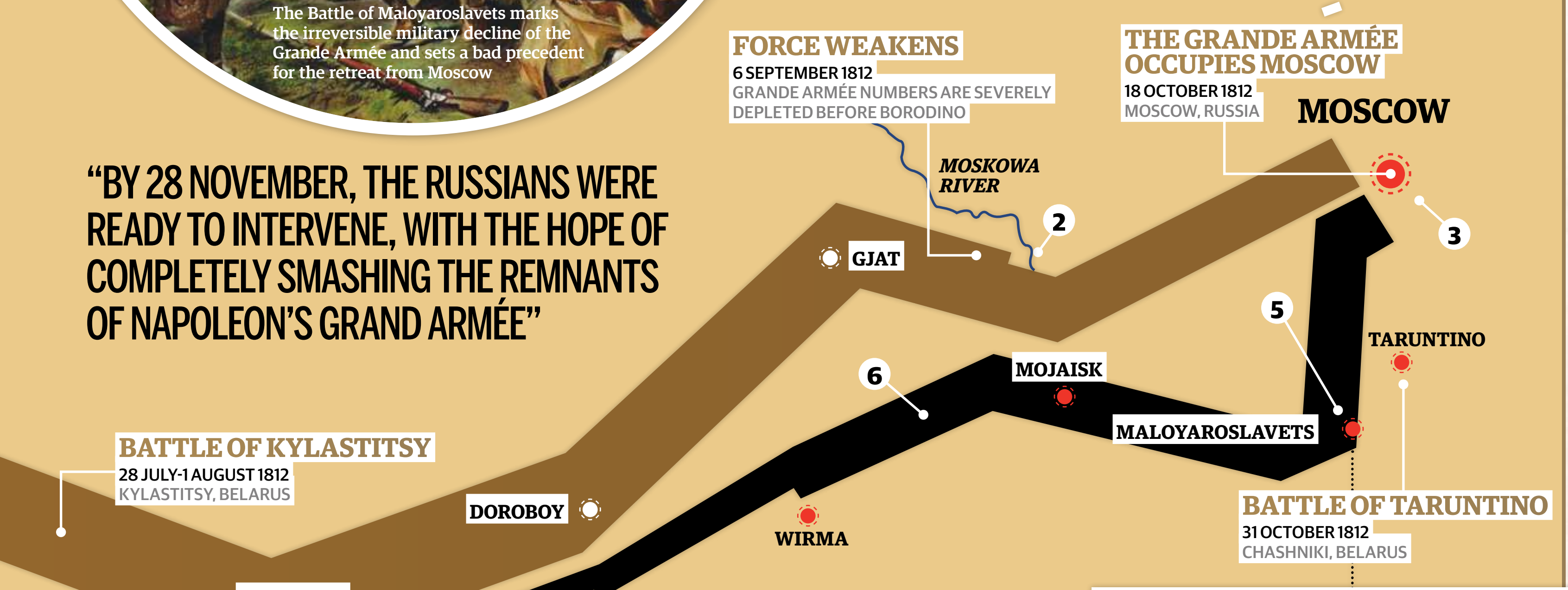
3 NOVEMBER 1812 **VYAZMA, RUSSIA**

Vyazma is a serious Russian attack on the retreating Grande Armée. The French are attacked half way along their overstretched line, with the greatest fighting occurring in the rearguard. 5,000 French are killed and morale plummets.



The Battle of Maloyaroslavets marks the irreversible military decline of the Grande Armée and sets a bad precedent for the retreat from Moscow

> "BY 28 NOVEMBER, THE RUSSIANS WERE READY TO INTERVENE, WITH THE HOPE OF COMPLETELY SMASHING THE REMNANTS OF NAPOLEON'S GRAND ARMÉE"

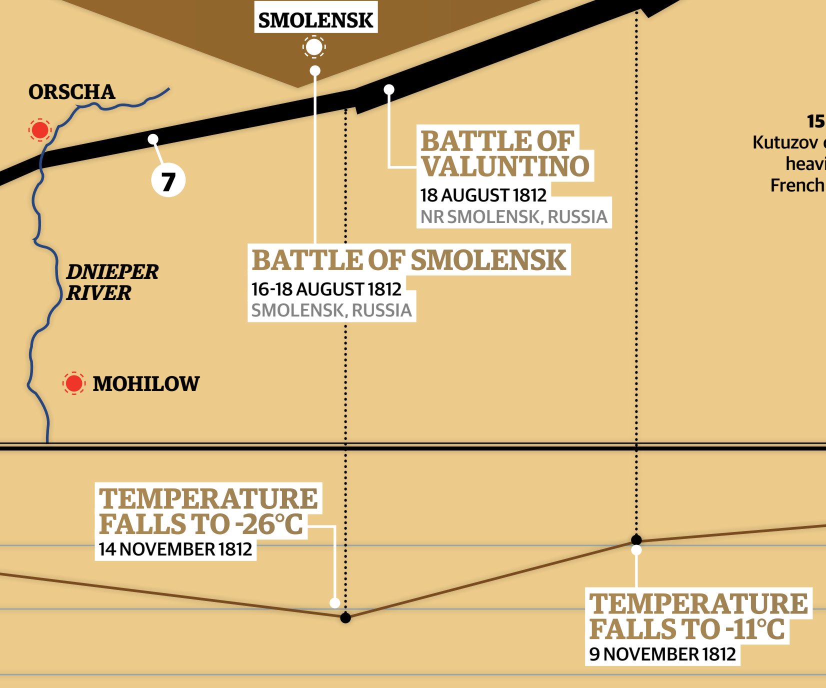


FORCE WEAKENS
6 SEPTEMBER 1812
GRANDE ARMÉE NUMBERS ARE SEVERELY DEPLETED BEFORE BORODINO

THE GRANDE ARMÉE OCCUPIES MOSCOW
18 OCTOBER 1812
MOSCOW, RUSSIA

BATTLE OF KYLASTITSY
28 JULY-1 AUGUST 1812
KYLASTITSY, BELARUS

BATTLE OF TARUNTINO
31 OCTOBER 1812
CHASHNIKI, BELARUS



BATTLE OF VALUNTINO
18 AUGUST 1812
NR SMOLENSK, RUSSIA

BATTLE OF SMOLENSK
16-18 AUGUST 1812
SMOLENSK, RUSSIA

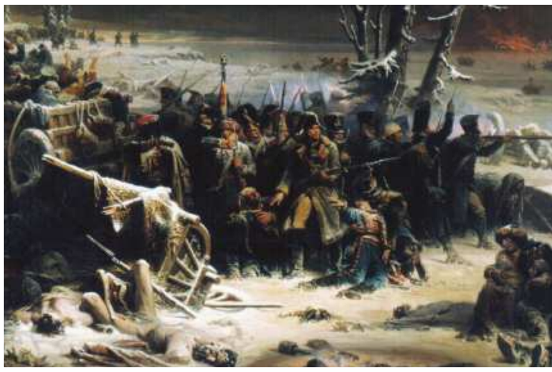
TEMPERATURE FALLS TO -26°C
14 NOVEMBER 1812

TEMPERATURE FALLS TO -11°C
9 NOVEMBER 1812

7 BATTLE OF KRASNOI

15-18 NOVEMBER 1812 **KRASNY, RUSSIA**

Kutuzov claims a great victory as the French suffer heavier losses than the Russians. Although the French manage to escape, Krasnoi continues the slow destruction of the Grande Armée.

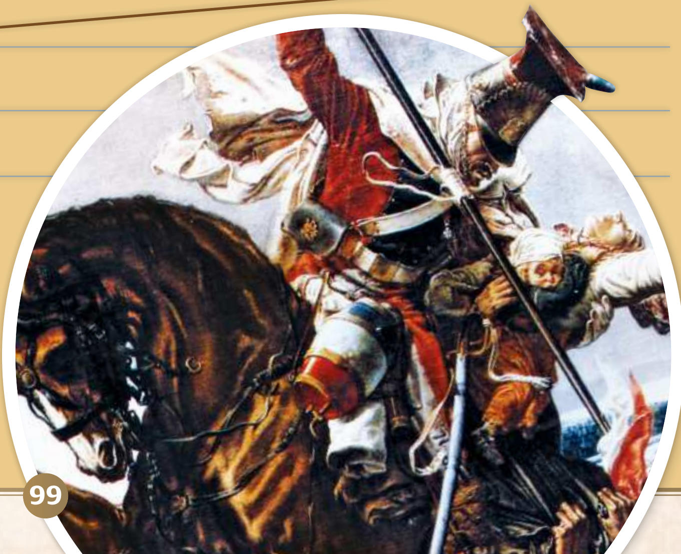


The courageous retreat of Marshal Ney's rearguard at Krasnoi. 'General Winter' is an arguably more deadly enemy than the Russians

8 BATTLE OF BEREZINA

26-29 NOVEMBER 1812 **BEREZINA RIVER, BARYSAW, BELARUS**

Trapped by Russian armies on the Berezina River, this battle is the last 'success' of the Grande Armée during 1812. Its remnants manage to escape across hastily constructed pontoon bridges and continue marching west to relative safety.



Polish lancers played a key role in Napoleon's Russian campaign

Images: Alamy

KEY BATTLE: BEREZINA

Napoleon's retreat had become desperate as one potential escape route after another was closed. By mid-November, there was just one chance to reach Poland – by crossing the Berezina River at Borisov

The savagely cold weather that had been plaguing the retreat ought now to have worked in favour of the exhausted French. The Berezina would normally be frozen that late in the year, which would make crossing easier. An unexpected thaw, however, scotched that possibility, leaving the bridge at Borisov as the sole remaining option.

The bridge was held by a small French corps commanded by General Dombrowski, but on 21 November they were driven away by superior Russian forces under Admiral Chichagov, who then crossed the bridge to the east side of the river. With General Wittgenstein closing in with another Russian army, and Marshal Kutuzov also expected to arrive soon, the situation for Napoleon was dire. Two days later, Chichagov was forced back over the Berezina, but was able to destroy the bridge as he withdrew, apparently trapping the French army on the east side of the river as superior Russian forces closed in.

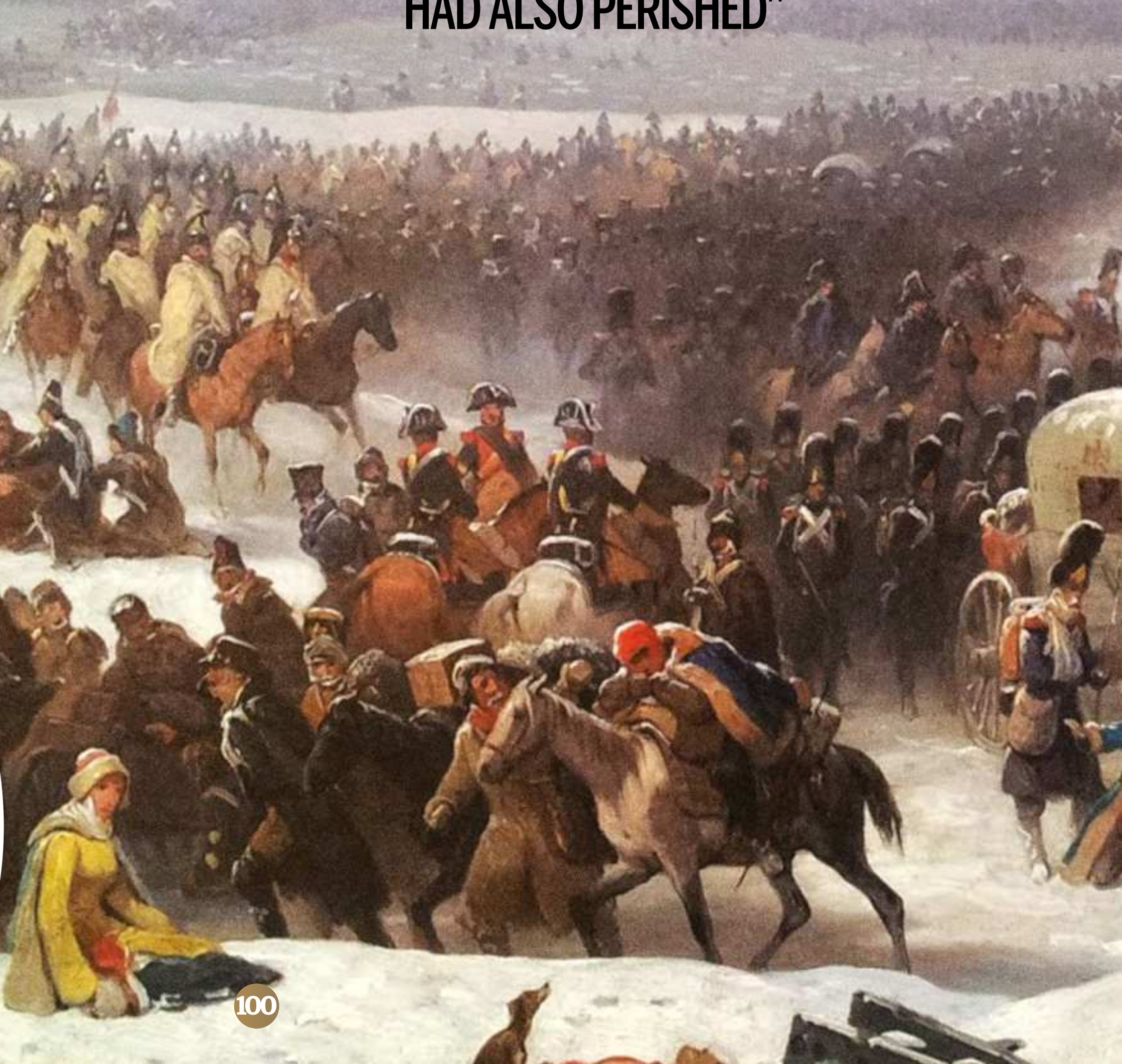
By luck, the French then discovered a ford where the army's engineers might be able quickly to throw up a bridge. The trick would be distracting the Russians while the bridge was built. In order to pull this off, Napoleon staged a number of diversions to the south. Chichagov took the bait and moved most of his men to cover the suspected French crossing, allowing French engineers to throw up two bridges, one for infantry and one for artillery.

Despite the desperate nature of the situation, the crossings were thoroughly planned, with army units scheduled to go over during the day and civilians (of which there were thousands) at night. The infantry bridge, completed by 1pm on 26 November, was weak, but enabled the first Frenchmen to cross and form a bridgehead. Marshal Oudinot, with the French II Corps, then pushed south to drive Chichagov further away. That night, III Corps, under Marshal Ney, crossed, with the Polish V Corps following.

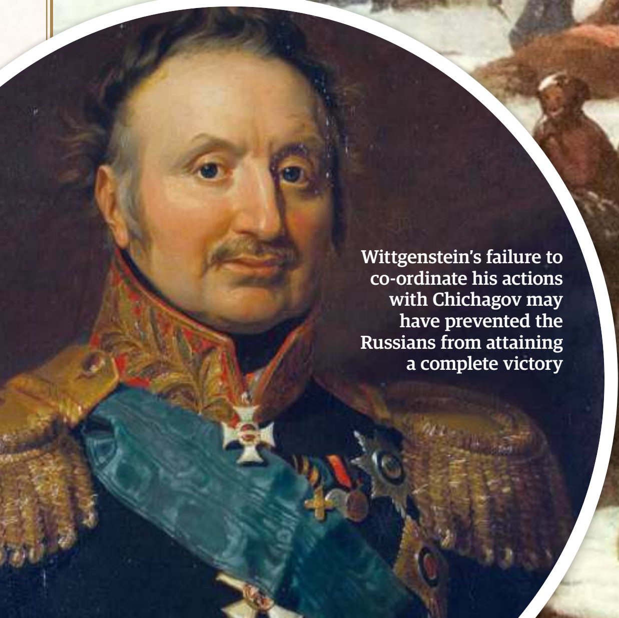
Artillery had also started to cross the sturdier second bridge around 3pm that afternoon, but the bridge collapsed five hours later and had to be rebuilt; in the freezing conditions, the engineers of General Eblé's corps suffered horribly as they hurried to fix the only escape.

The following day, more units made it across the river, although the army stragglers and civilians proved unwilling to cross under cover of darkness, preferring to wait on the east bank. As events played out, they would wait there until it was too late to cross.

"THE BATTLE OF BEREZINA HAD COST NAPOLEON APPROXIMATELY 20-30,000 MEN, WHILE ANOTHER 20,000 STRAGGLERS AND CIVILIANS HAD ALSO PERISHED"



The remnants of Napoleon's army cross the Berezina on two hastily constructed bridges



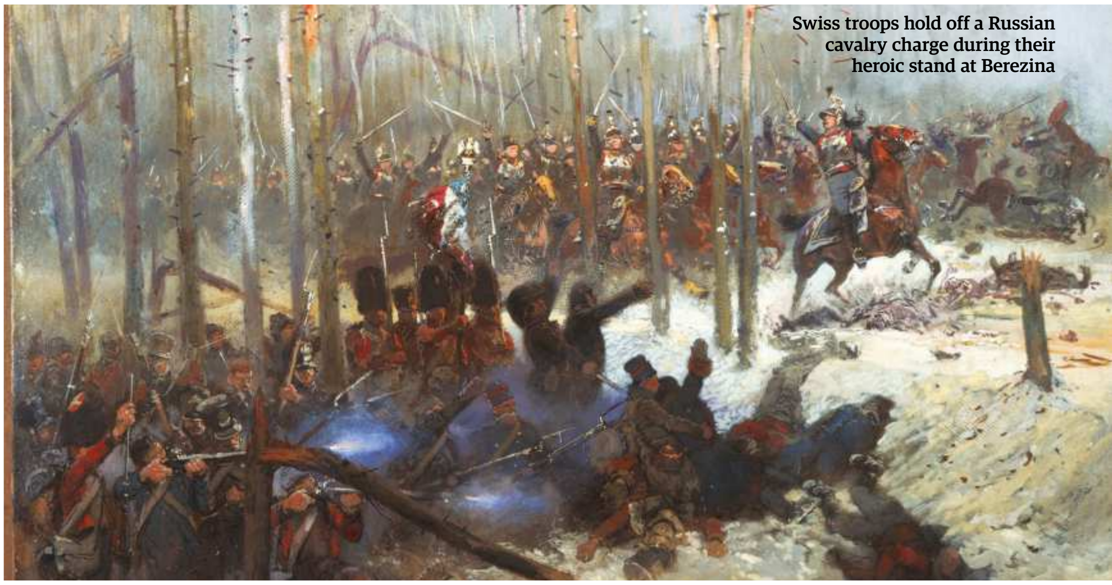
Wittgenstein's failure to co-ordinate his actions with Chichagov may have prevented the Russians from attaining a complete victory

By 28 November, the Russians were ready to intervene, with the hope of completely smashing the remnants of Napoleon's Grand Armée. Chichagov advanced against the bulk of the army on the western side of the river while Wittgenstein tackled the rearguard, commanded by Marshal Claude Victor-Perrin, on the east. Launching 25,000 of his men against around 19,000 French, Chichagov appeared to be on the verge of success when a charge by Polish lancers and French cuirassiers stopped the Russians' momentum and let the French hold out till nightfall.

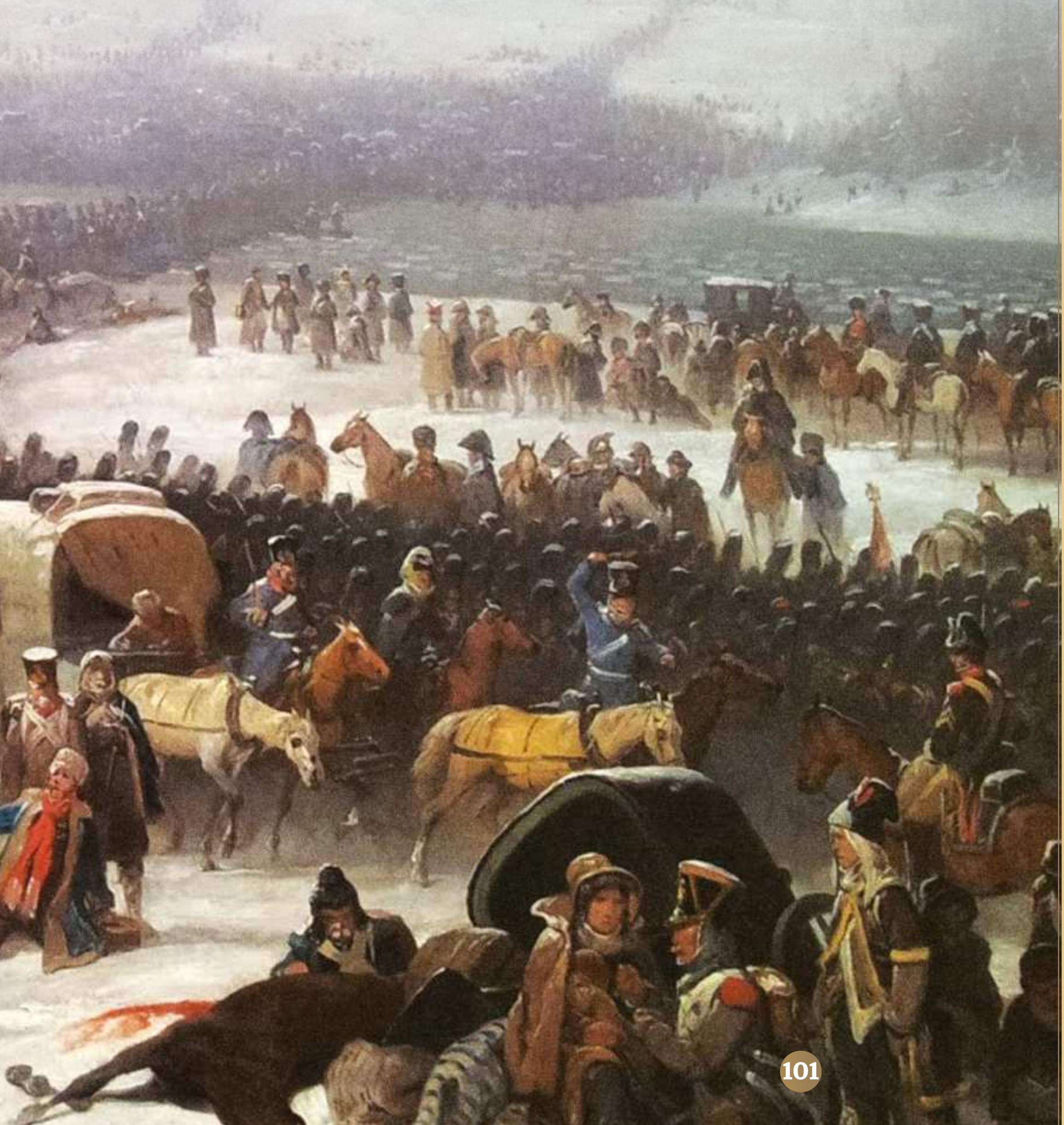
Strangely, Wittgenstein employed only a fraction of his men in his attack on the east bank - around 14,000 out of 45,000. Despite this, the situation was so grim that Napoleon actually sent a division back across the Berezina. With the fighting desperate, the rearguard held firm, but Russian artillery sparked a panic among the army stragglers, who stampeded and caused the artillery bridge to collapse again.

At around 7pm on the evening of 28 November, the last units were ordered to cross the river and then burn the bridges in order to halt the Russians' pursuit. Tragically, the panicked civilians could still not be convinced to cross, and only tried to do so when the bridges had been set on fire, resulting in thousands of needless deaths.

The Battle of Berezina had cost Napoleon approximately 20-30,000 men, while another 20,000 stragglers and civilians had also perished. It would normally have been considered a terrible defeat, but by getting a remnant of the Grand Armée across the river, he had at least preserved a foundation stone upon which a new army could be built.



Swiss troops hold off a Russian cavalry charge during their heroic stand at Berezina



THE SWISS STAND FIRM

Many nationalities fought for Napoleon during the Russian campaign, but none with more courage than the Swiss infantry showed at Berezina

The Swiss that fought under the French colours at Berezina played a key role in allowing the army to cross the river. They had suffered greatly during the Russian campaign, with around 6,700 of the original 8,000 already lost before the bedraggled army reached the Berezina.

As part of the French II Corps they then had to hold back Chichagov's army to give the bulk of the French forces time to cross the river. Often having to resort to bayonet charges in order to keep the Russians at bay, and with ammunition in scarce supply, the Swiss somehow held the left flank of the French position. Repeatedly driven back, they managed to respond each time, but at a terrible cost. Only 300 Swiss troops survived the battle.

Adding insult to injury, in the chaos of the retreat records were lost and most of the 1,000 or so men who died holding back Chichagov's army were simply classed as disappeared, rather than officially dead. As late as 30 years after the battle, requests were still being made for information on the fate of soldiers involved in the savage action. Little wonder, then, that 'Berezina' became adopted by French-speakers as a synonym for 'disaster'.

> **"REPEATEDLY DRIVEN BACK, THE SOLDIERS RESPONDED EACH TIME, BUT AT A TERRIBLE COST. ONLY 300 SWISS TROOPS SURVIVED THE BATTLE"**

HEROES & COMMANDERS

The French invasion of Russia ultimately revealed significant flaws in the respective commanders-in-chief but also great virtues in their subordinates

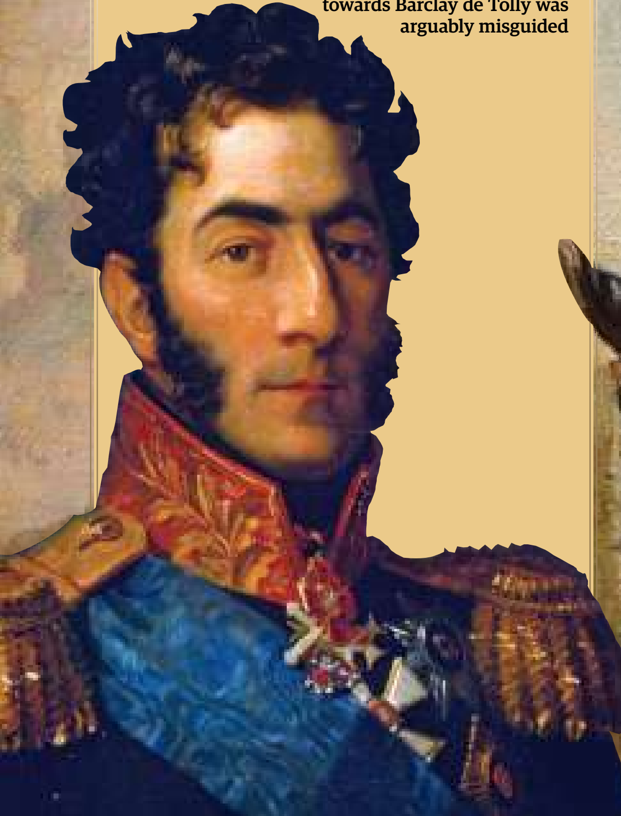
PYOTR BAGRATION

THE AGGRESSIVE GEORGIAN PRINCE

YEARS: 1765-1812 **COUNTRY:** RUSSIA

A member of the Georgian royal family, Prince Bagration joined the Russian army in 1782 and was the subordinate commander to Generalissimo Alexander Suvorov during the Italian and Swiss expeditions of 1799-1800. He gained further experience fighting at the battles of Ulm, Austerlitz, Eylau and Friedland. Bagration's relationship with Tsar Alexander I was strained but in 1812, he was appointed to command Russia's 2nd Army.

The prince vigorously advocated fighting the Grande Armée in open battle but this clashed with Barclay de Tolly's policy of making the French march deeper into Russian territory. Bagration's frustration led him to actively campaign to remove Barclay from command but he also won victories on the retreat towards Moscow. After fighting the Grande Armée to a draw at the Battle of Mogilev and a failed counterattack at Smolensk, Bagration commanded the left wing at the Battle of Borodino where he was mortally wounded and eventually died of an infected wound on 24 September 1812.



Despite being popular among his troops and a talented battlefield commander, Bagration lacked strategic grasp and his animosity towards Barclay de Tolly was arguably misguided

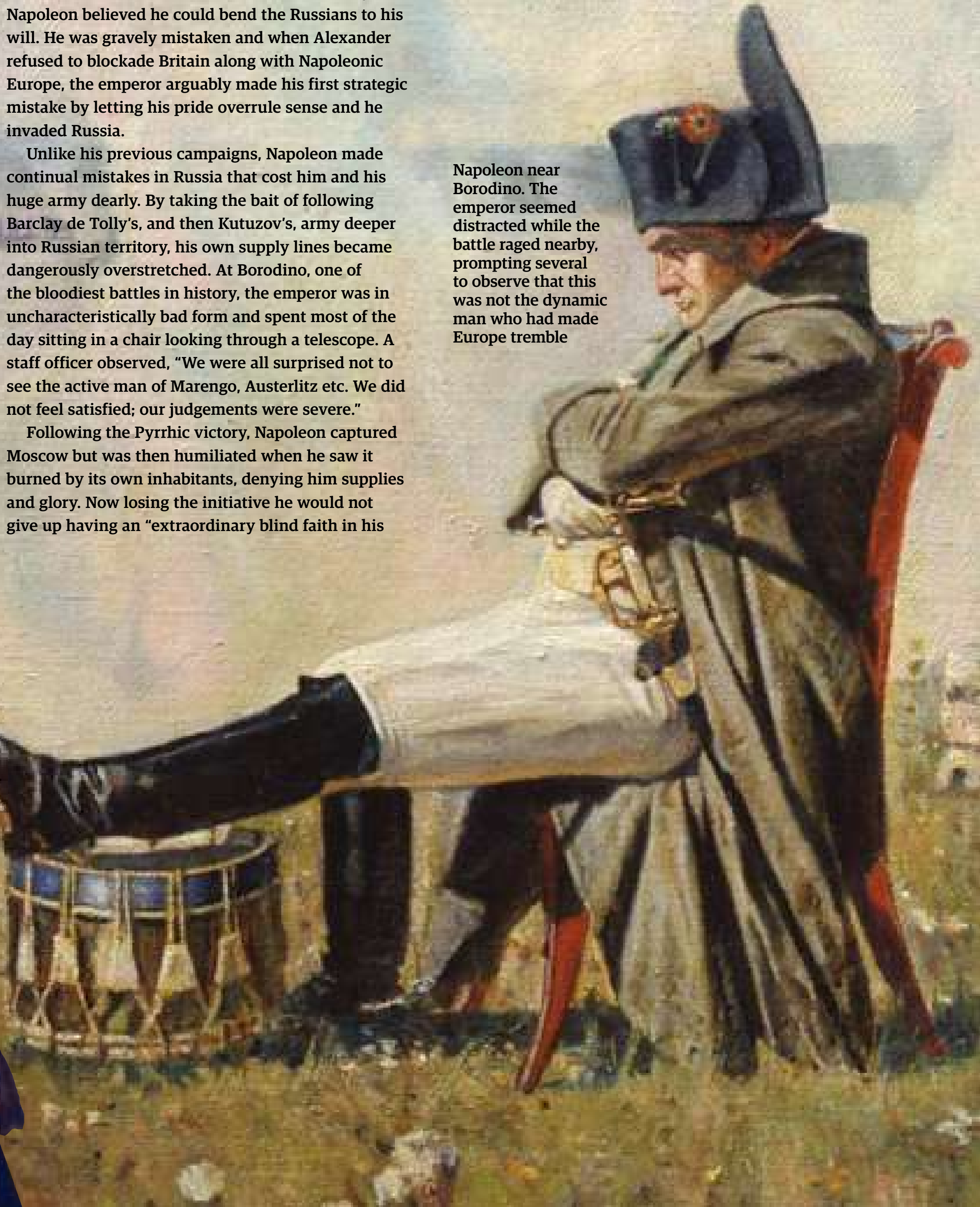
NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

THE OVERAMBITIOUS BUT LACKLUSTRE EMPEROR **YEARS:** 1769-1821 **COUNTRY:** FRANCE

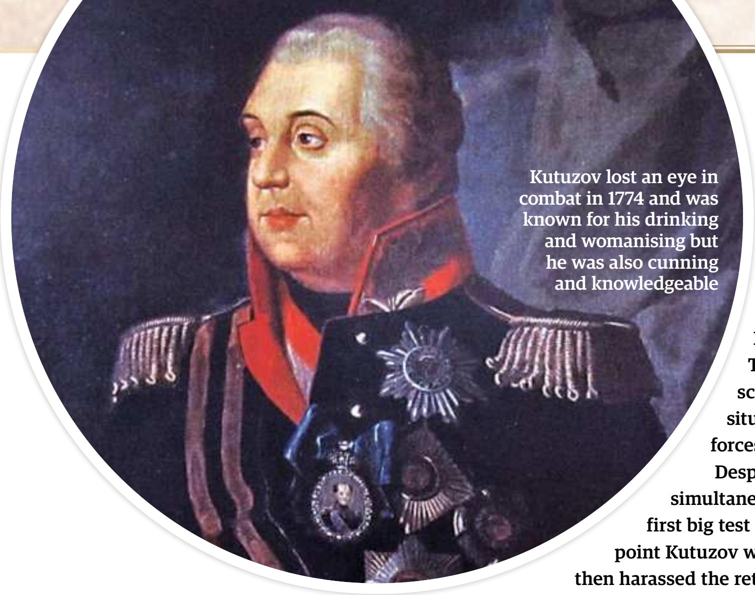
At the beginning of 1812 Napoleon, the former Corsican artilleryman, was at the peak of his powers. He had become emperor of the French and the 'Master of Europe' through a series of brilliant victories and campaigns including the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805 where he defeated the Austrians and Russians. Among the losers of this battle were Mikhail Kutuzov and Tsar Alexander I himself, so for the next seven years Napoleon believed he could bend the Russians to his will. He was gravely mistaken and when Alexander refused to blockade Britain along with Napoleonic Europe, the emperor arguably made his first strategic mistake by letting his pride overrule sense and he invaded Russia.

Unlike his previous campaigns, Napoleon made continual mistakes in Russia that cost him and his huge army dearly. By taking the bait of following Barclay de Tolly's, and then Kutuzov's, army deeper into Russian territory, his own supply lines became dangerously overstretched. At Borodino, one of the bloodiest battles in history, the emperor was in uncharacteristically bad form and spent most of the day sitting in a chair looking through a telescope. A staff officer observed, "We were all surprised not to see the active man of Marengo, Austerlitz etc. We did not feel satisfied; our judgements were severe."

Following the Pyrrhic victory, Napoleon captured Moscow but was then humiliated when he saw it burned by its own inhabitants, denying him supplies and glory. Now losing the initiative he would not give up having an "extraordinary blind faith in his own star" but Moscow had to be abandoned and the subsequent retreat was a disaster. Even the emperor was forced to exchange his famous bicorn hat in favour of Polish winter clothing but he occasionally showed flashes of his old genius, particularly at the Berezina. However, Napoleon eventually abandoned his own army to die and took a fast sleigh back to Paris, blaming everyone but himself for the disaster.



Napoleon near Borodino. The emperor seemed distracted while the battle raged nearby, prompting several to observe that this was not the dynamic man who had made Europe tremble



Kutuzov lost an eye in combat in 1774 and was known for his drinking and womanising but he was also cunning and knowledgeable

MIKHAIL KUTUZOV

THE SLUGGISH VICTOR OF 1812 **YEARS:** 1745-1813 **COUNTRY:** RUSSIA

Kutuzov became an artilleryman at the age of 14 and saw extensive action in campaigns against Turkey. After some time as a diplomat he commanded 55,000 troops in 1805 but he was made a scapegoat by Tsar Alexander I for the disastrous coalition defeat at Austerlitz. However by 1812 the situation was so grave that Alexander belatedly appointed him as commander-in-chief of the Russian forces to replace Barclay de Tolly.

Despite replacing Barclay, Kutuzov largely adopted his strategy of retreating towards Moscow while simultaneously harassing the Grande Armée with minor battles. However, at Borodino Kutuzov faced his first big test and he was found wanting. The direction of the battle often fell to his subordinates and at one point Kutuzov was found picnicking with officers behind the lines. However he cunningly abandoned Moscow and then harassed the retreating Grande Armée before inflicting a defeat on them at the Battle of Maloyaroslavets. By 1813 Kutuzov had entered Poland and Prussia.

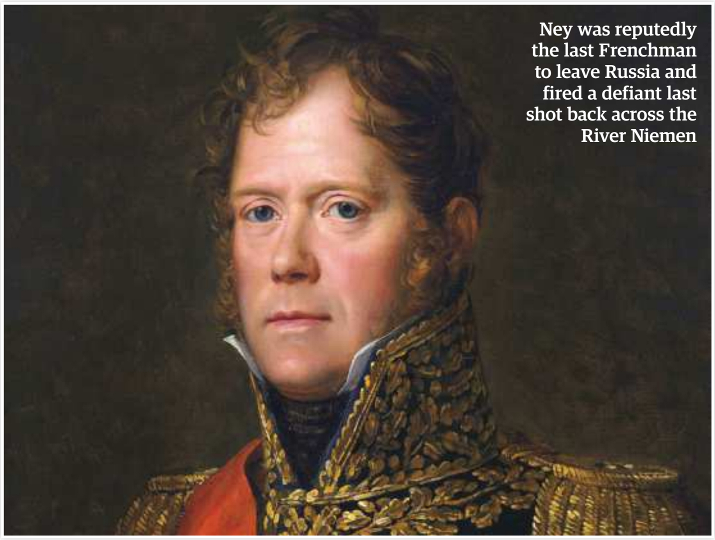
MICHEL NEY

"THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE" **YEARS:** 1769-1815 **COUNTRY:** FRANCE

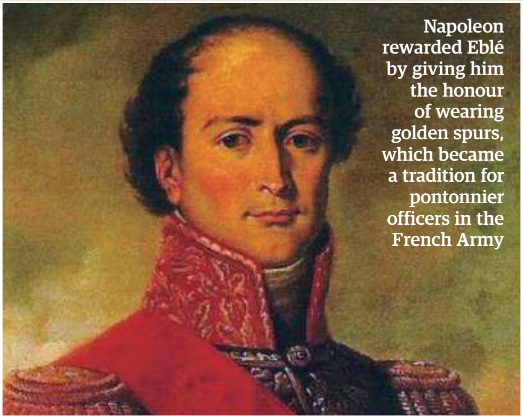
Arguably the most courageous of Napoleon's marshals, Ney was the son of a cooper but he enlisted in the French army as a hussar in 1787 and by 1796 he was a general. Initially a republican, Ney became a loyal supporter of Napoleon and in 1804 he was made a marshal of France and fought across Europe. In 1812 Ney was given command of III Corps and he especially distinguished himself during the infamous retreat.

III Corps mostly formed the rearguard of the retreat and at one point Ney's men became cut off from the main force. Despite a desperate fight and a rush across the River Dnieper, Ney managed to extricate himself with 800 men. At the Berezina he held off the Russians for a whole day and remained with the rearguard until the end of the campaign. Napoleon subsequently dubbed him the "bravest of the brave."

"AT THE BEREZINA HE HELD OFF THE RUSSIANS FOR A WHOLE DAY AND REMAINED WITH THE REARGUARD UNTIL THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN"



Ney was reputedly the last Frenchman to leave Russia and fired a defiant last shot back across the River Niemen



Napoleon rewarded Eblé by giving him the honour of wearing golden spurs, which became a tradition for pontonnier officers in the French Army

JEAN BAPTISTE EBLÉ

THE SAVIOUR OF THE GRANDE ARMÉE **YEARS:** 1758-1812 **COUNTRY:** FRANCE

Eblé joined the French Army in 1793 as an artilleryman and quickly became a general the following year. In 1812 his specific orders were to command engineers, which included 400 Dutch soldiers who were experts when it came to constructing pontoon bridges.

In November 1812 the beleaguered Grande Armée reached the banks of the icy Berezina but the Russians blocked their way. Napoleon had ordered that all of the bridging train be destroyed but Eblé disobeyed and saved some equipment. A ford was discovered and the pontonniers started to build three new bridges.

Eblé led by example and worked tirelessly in freezing water to successfully construct the bridges. The remnants of the army were able to continue retreating but many exhausted camp followers refused to cross the bridges, despite Eblé's attempts to convince them. Eblé was promoted to commander-in-chief of the artillery but his exertions hastened his early death by the end of the year.

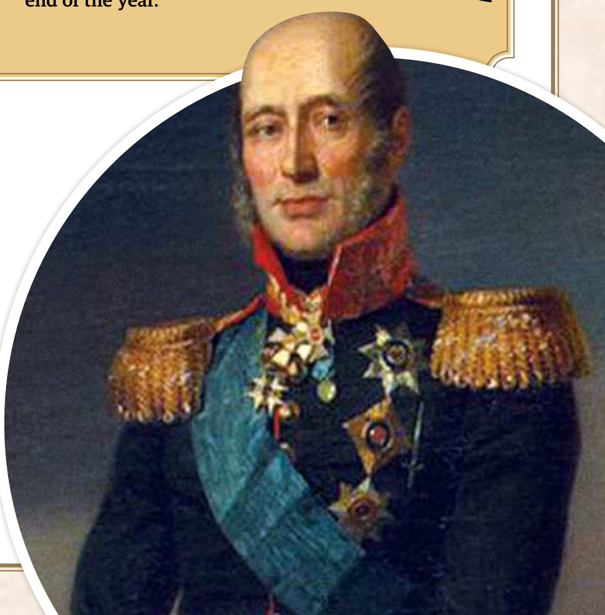
Images: Alamy

MICHAEL ANDREAS BARCLAY DE TOLLY

THE UNDERRATED RUSSIAN COMMANDER **YEARS:** 1761-1818 **COUNTRY:** RUSSIA

Born into a German-speaking family of Scottish descent in what is now Lithuania, Barclay de Tolly was something of an outsider among the Russian nobility. Nevertheless he spent almost his entire life in the Russian army, having enlisted aged only nine. By 1812 he was minister of war and a favourite of Tsar Alexander I who appointed him the commander of Russia's 1st Army and effective commander-in-chief, in direct opposition to Napoleon.

Barclay's main contribution to the 1812 campaign was pursuing a policy of avoiding pitched battles in favour of gaining time and retreating further and further into Russia to stretch the logistical capabilities of the Grande Armée to breaking point. This strategy initially proved highly unpopular among other senior officers in the Russian forces and Mikhail Kutuzov replaced Barclay. However, he still retained command of 1st Army and led the right wing at Borodino where he performed well. Despite retiring from the army soon afterwards on grounds of ill-health, Barclay's strategy ultimately bore fruit and he was subsequently proclaimed a hero.



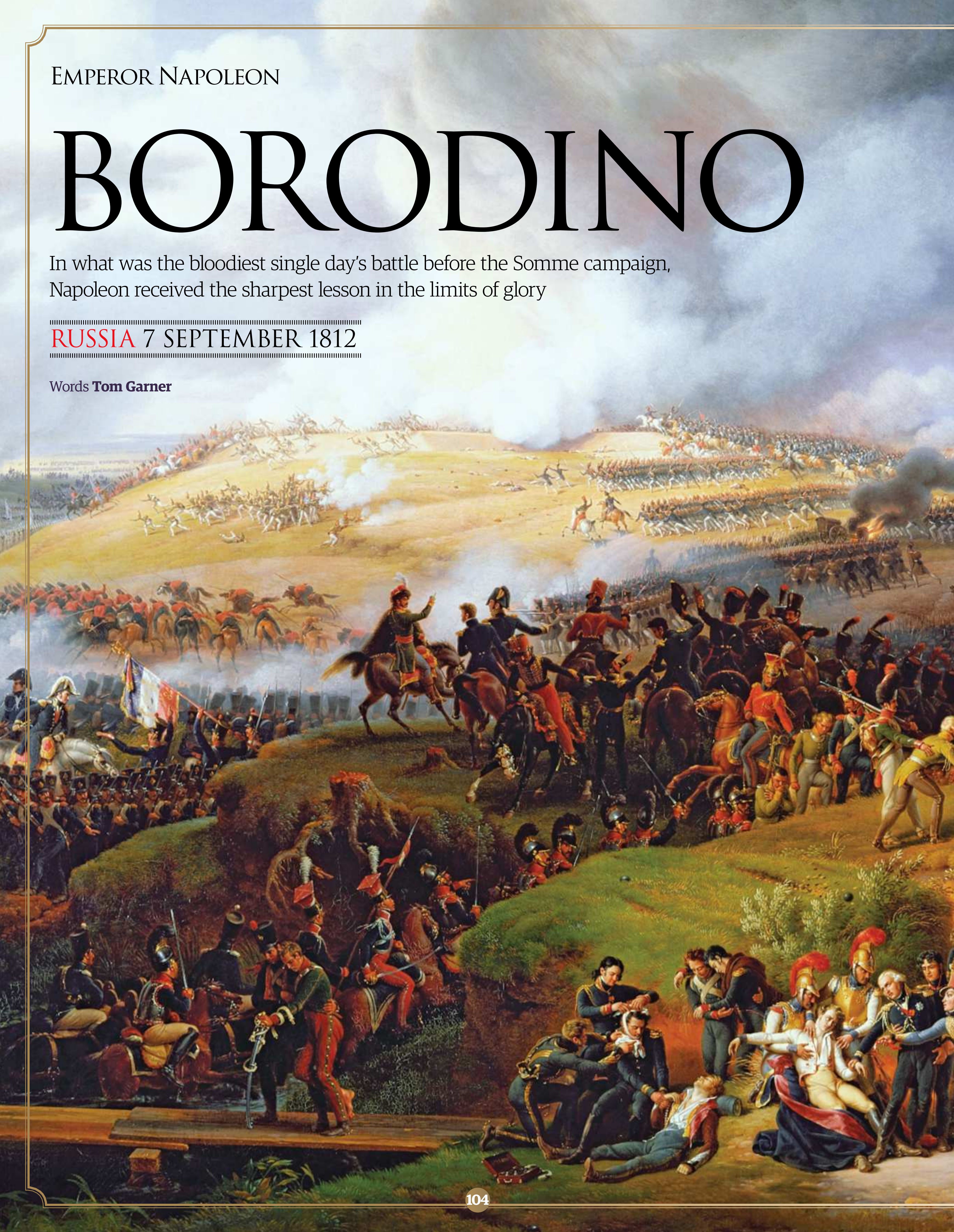
EMPEROR NAPOLEON

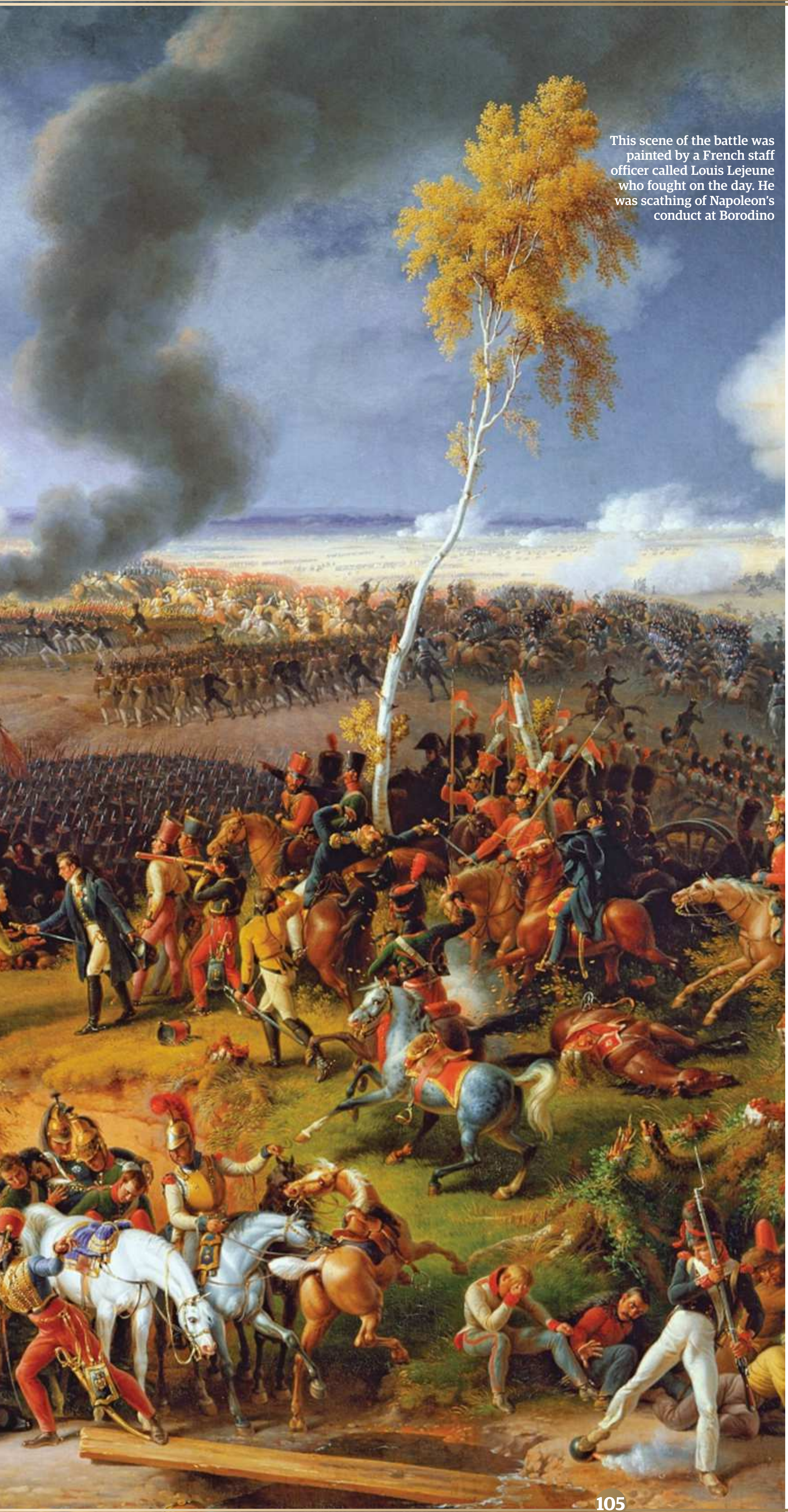
BORODINO

In what was the bloodiest single day's battle before the Somme campaign, Napoleon received the sharpest lesson in the limits of glory

RUSSIA 7 SEPTEMBER 1812

Words **Tom Garner**





This scene of the battle was painted by a French staff officer called Louis Lejeune who fought on the day. He was scathing of Napoleon's conduct at Borodino

On 28 October 1812, the dispirited Grande Armée passed through the village of Borodino during a humiliating retreat from Moscow. Here their morale reached new lows, for this was the site of an exceptionally bloody battle that they had fought nearly two months previously. The battlefield had not yet been cleared of its dead and the corpses had been partially eaten by animals. An eyewitness, Adrien de Mailly, described the sight as, "…some grotesque travesty making fun of misery and death – it was odious!" The gruesome scene served as a symbolic reminder of one of the most hideous battles in history.

Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Russia in 1812 was an exceptionally dramatic campaign that would decide the fate of Russia and Napoleonic Europe. It is famous for the retreat from Moscow, where the Grande Armée was reduced to a husk of its former self when thousands of soldiers froze to death during the infamous Russian winter. Nonetheless, the army had suffered catastrophe even before it reached Moscow – on the battlefield of Borodino. This mighty clash, which was immortalised in Leo Tolstoy's novel *War And Peace* and Pyotr Tchaikovsky's musical piece the 1812 Overture, is perhaps the most Pyrrhic of all victories and it marked the beginning of Napoleon's decline.

THE MASTER OF EUROPE

The road to Borodino lies in the strained diplomacy following French successes. Napoleon fought the Russians to the negotiating table following their heavy defeat at Friedland in 1807. At the Treaty of Tilsit in June 1807, he imposed his will on both the king of Prussia and Tsar Alexander I. The Russians had to accept French hegemony in central Europe and surrender their Mediterranean possessions, but most importantly they had to join the 'Continental System', Napoleon's blockade of Britain that banned the import of British goods into European countries that were allied to or dependent on France. His plan was to commercially squeeze Britain into submission, but in the process Russia was highly provoked. Trade with Britain was important to the Russian economy, so in 1810 the Tsar resumed trading with the British.

Relations between France and Russia steadily deteriorated with Napoleon coming to believe that Alexander was preparing to wage war. Although this was not in fact the case, the slide to conflict was irreversible as the two proud monarchs became increasingly frustrated with the other's intentions. Eventually Napoleon's pride got the better of him and in early 1812 he amassed a huge army that he intended to march into Russia in order to re-impose his will on Alexander. Napoleon was taking a huge gamble in provoking a largely unnecessary war with Russia and the resulting campaign would have huge consequences for all concerned.

For the invasion, Napoleon put together one of the largest forces in history. The Grande Armée (Great Army) numbered between 450,000-600,000 men and was gathered from all parts of Europe. The majority of the troops were French but there were large contingents from all over France's new domains, including 95,000 Poles and 81,000 Germans. The reason for its enormous size was that after his study of Charles XII of Sweden's failed invasion of Russia in 1709, Napoleon concluded that he needed at least 500,000 men and a huge stockpile of supplies for a successful campaign. Despite this, he couldn't control this many men in a single force, and the army split into three for the advance into Russia. Each would be many miles apart with Napoleon commanding the central force.

In late June 1812, French forces crossed the River Niemen into Russian territory and the invasion began. Facing them was a Russian army of approximately 409,000 regulars, with 211,000 in the front lines. Unlike the Grande Armée, the Russians had no legendary figurehead to rally around, and their leaders frequently quarrelled and contradicted one another. Initially the Russians were commanded by the minister of war, Barclay de Tolly, who was competent but unfairly mistrusted by his peers for being a 'foreigner' (he had distant Scottish-German ancestry). Other key players were the popular Georgian Prince Pyotr Bagration and the veteran Field Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov, who was highly experienced but dangerously sluggish. All three would play critical roles in the battle to come.

A CHAOTIC CAMPAIGN

The campaign started to go wrong immediately for Napoleon. Advancing from Vitebsk, he hoped to catch the Russian army in the open, but it kept retreating while the Grande Armée marched hundreds of miles away from its nearest supply base at Kovno. The French supply lines became overstretched, wreaking havoc among Napoleon's troops. The central force under the emperor's direct command had numbered 286,000 men when it crossed the Niemen in June, but by September, the harsh rigours of the campaign had reduced that number to just over 161,000 men. These huge losses did not bode well for the future.

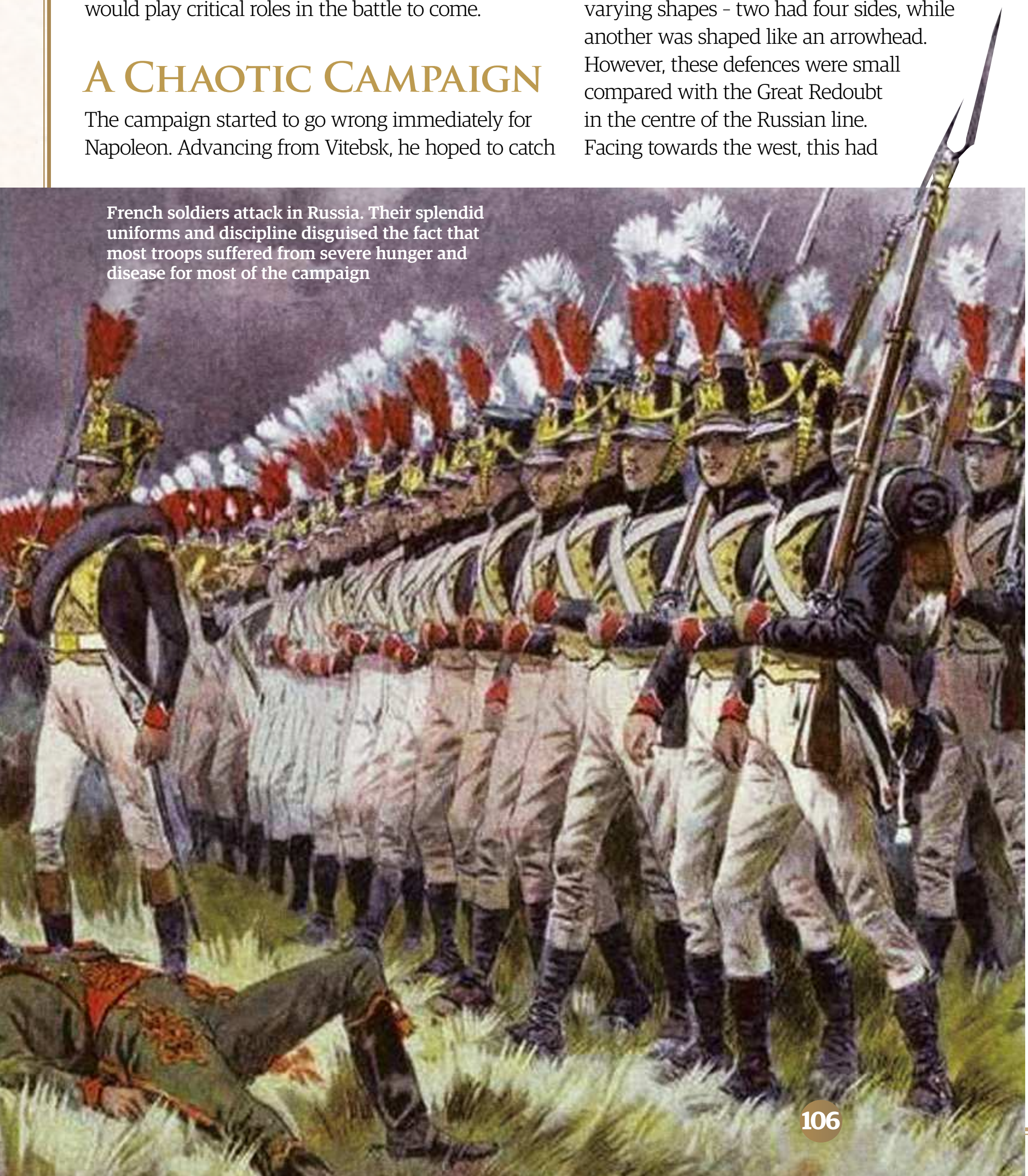
Nevertheless, Napoleon did catch up with the Russians 110 kilometres (68 miles) west of Moscow, near to the village of Borodino, in September. From the Russian perspective this was reluctantly intentional. It was clear that Napoleon was aiming for Moscow in order to enforce his will on Tsar Alexander, who was ensconced at St Petersburg. The Russians had adopted a scorched-earth policy to deprive the Grande Armée of supplies, but now political pressure was forcing them to make a stand against the 'Corsican Ogre'. Consequently, the Russian army halted at Borodino and constructed hastily-built earthworks known as fleches, which would help the artillery bombard the Grande Armée.

The Russians built three fleches, each between 1.5 and 2 metres (5 and 6.6 feet) tall and of varying shapes - two had four sides, while another was shaped like an arrowhead. However, these defences were small compared with the Great Redoubt in the centre of the Russian line. Facing towards the west, this had 72-metre-long shoulders that met in the middle at a 100-degree angle, was protected by a ditch with extra pits to stop horses, and had 18-24 cannon. As the battlefield was relatively small, consisting of small hills, brooks and the River Kalatsha, these earthworks would prove decisive. The village of Borodino itself sat on the north bank of the Kalatsha, to the east was Gorki and Utitsa was on the southern flank. In the centre was Semeonovskoie, positioned on a hill between the Great Redoubt and the fleches - although its wooden buildings were dismantled before the battle.

OPPOSING FORCES

GRAND ARMÉE	VS	IMPERIAL RUSSIAN ARMY
LEADER EMPEROR NAPOLEON I		**LEADERS** FIELD MARSHAL MIKHAIL KUTUZOV
TROOPS 128,000-134,000		**TROOPS** 154,000-157,000
CANNON 584		**CANNON** 640

These fortifications gave a false sense that the Russians were well prepared, but in reality their leadership was in complete disarray. De Tolly had



French soldiers attack in Russia. Their splendid uniforms and discipline disguised the fact that most troops suffered from severe hunger and disease for most of the campaign

recently been demoted by Kutuzov and Bagration was left dissatisfied with both of his superiors. Kutuzov, although highly experienced and popular with his troops, was almost 67 years old and incapable of confident decision-making in the field. He commanded between 154,000-157,000 troops but it was unclear how they would perform in the field against the Grande Armée.

Napoleon's troops themselves were in a bad condition. At a roll call at Gzhatsk on 2 September, only 128,000 men answered the muster. There were about 6,000 straggling troops who would be able to catch up but this meant there were only 134,000 men prepared for battle. A French grenadier remembered the underfed troops in his army, "If General Kutuzov had been able to put off battle for several days, there is no doubt he would have vanquished us without a fight. The enemy was a vicious hunger which was destroying us."

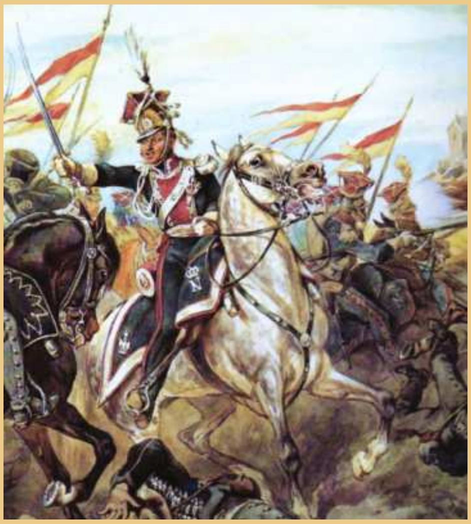
There were similar sentiments on the night before the battle on 6-7 September. Lieutenant Heinrich Vossler recalled, "…a miserable plate of bread soup oiled with the stump of a tallow candle was all I had to eat on the eve of the big battle. But in my famished condition even this revolting dish seemed quite appetising." Many like Colonel Boulart, simply felt despair: "If we are beaten, what terrible risks will we not run! Can a single one of us expect to return to his native country?" Even Napoleon remarked to one of his generals that his army was in bad shape when he said: "poor army, it is much reduced." By contrast, the better-fed Russians were looking forward to the

THE GRANDE ARMÉE: AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE

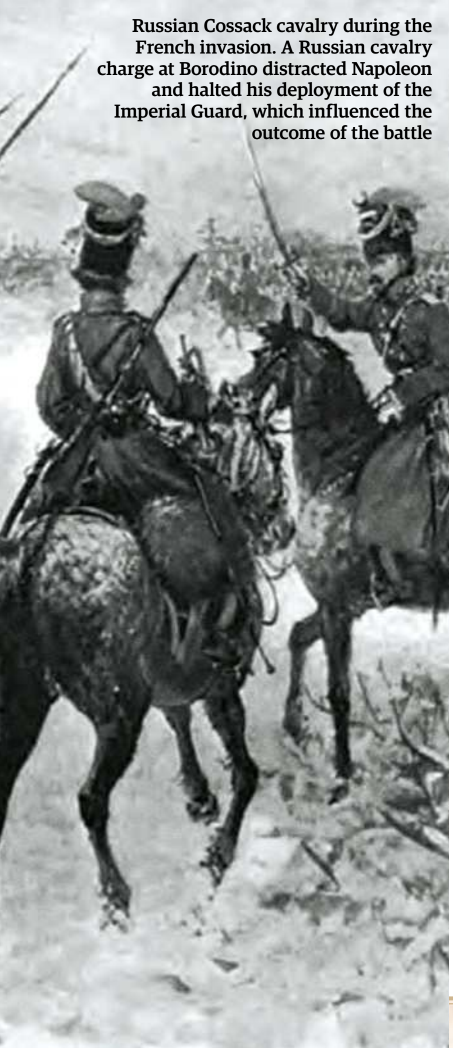
The Grande Armée is traditionally seen as being an exclusive French force, but in reality it was cosmopolitan and represented all the European nations that were either occupied by, or allied to, Napoleon's empire. Consequently, although the majority of troops were French, it also contained soldiers from the German states, Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Italian peninsula, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland and Croatia. All nationalities were commanded by French generals and imbued with French military culture, with the exception of the Poles, Austrians and Prussians.

The Poles were the largest non-French contingent, numbering 95,000 men, and were enthusiastic allies against the Russians. There were also 81,000 Germans, who were split in their loyalties. None had much love for the French, but the Germans who came from Napoleon's enforced 'Confederation of the Rhine' were mostly antagonistic towards the 20,000 serving Prussians, but all were keen to roll the Russians out of Europe.

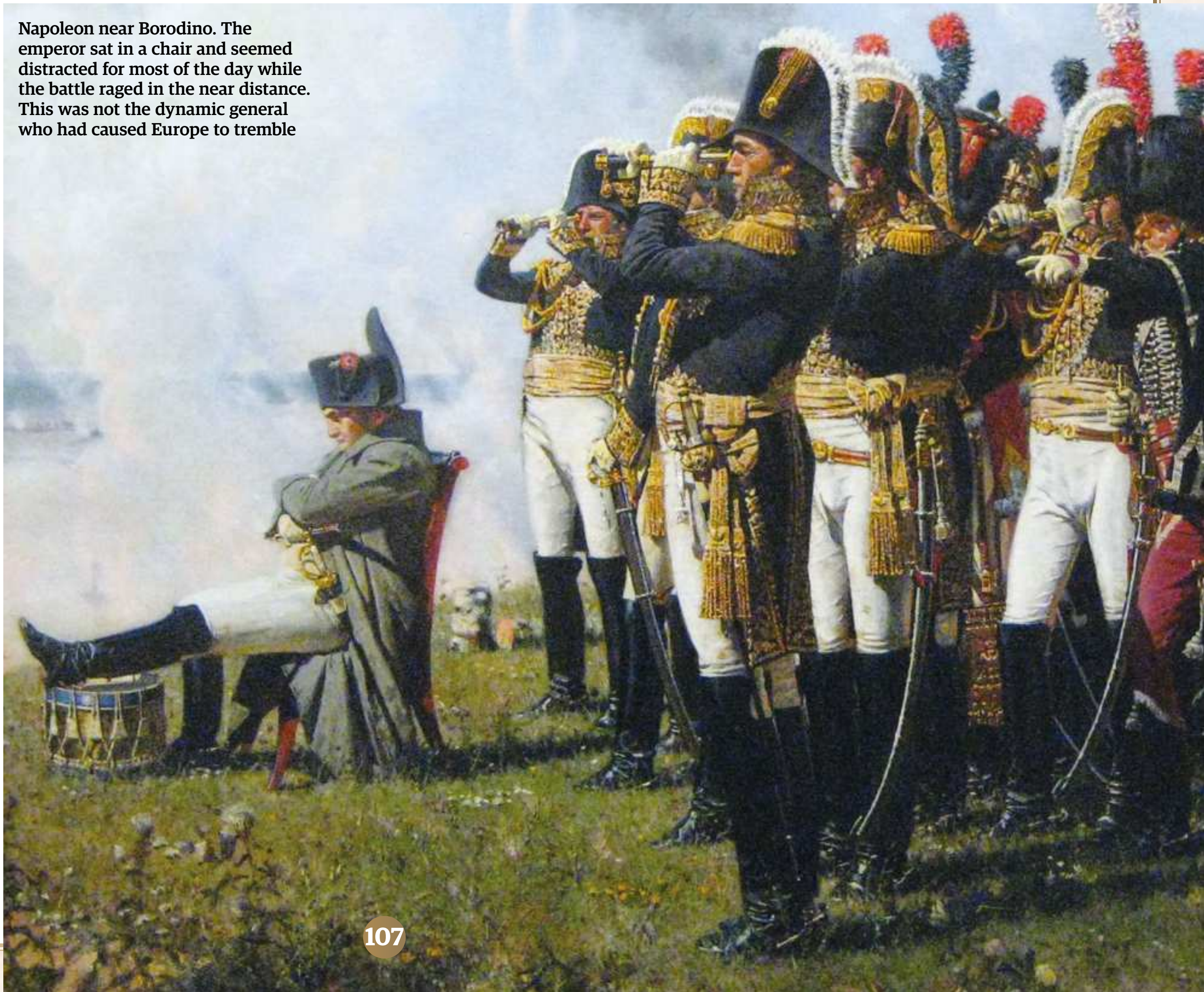
Many of the non-French contingents came from occupied territories and resented being part of the army. Lieutenant von Wedel wrote: "There were many who, in their heart of hearts, wished the Russians success." However he also conceded the power of Napoleon's presence, "Whatever their personal feelings may have been there was nobody who did not see in him the greatest and most able of all generals. The aura of his greatness subjugated me as well and I, like the others, shouted, 'Vive l'Empereur!'"



Right: Soldiers of the 1st Light Polish Cavalry Regiment of the Imperial Guard. At Borodino this regiment was kept in reserve, but 95,000 Poles served in the Grande Armée



Russian Cossack cavalry during the French invasion. A Russian cavalry charge at Borodino distracted Napoleon and halted his deployment of the Imperial Guard, which influenced the outcome of the battle



Napoleon near Borodino. The emperor sat in a chair and seemed distracted for most of the day while the battle raged in the near distance. This was not the dynamic general who had caused Europe to tremble

fighting, such as Lieutenant Nikolai Mitarevsky: "I was eager to take part in a great battle, to experience all the feelings of being in one, and to be able to say afterwards that I had been in such a battle."

To boost morale, Napoleon issued a proclamation that stated: "Soldiers! This is the battle you have looked forward to so much! Now victory depends on you: we need it. Conduct yourselves as you did at Austerlitz… and may the most distant generations cite your conduct on this day with pride. Let it be said of you: 'He was at this great battle under the walls of Moscow!'" Kutuzov, for his part, issued a more grounded statement. "Boys, today it will fall on you to defend your native land; you must serve faithfully and truly to the last drop of blood. I am counting on you. God will help us! Say your prayers!"

AN ERUPTION OF DEATH

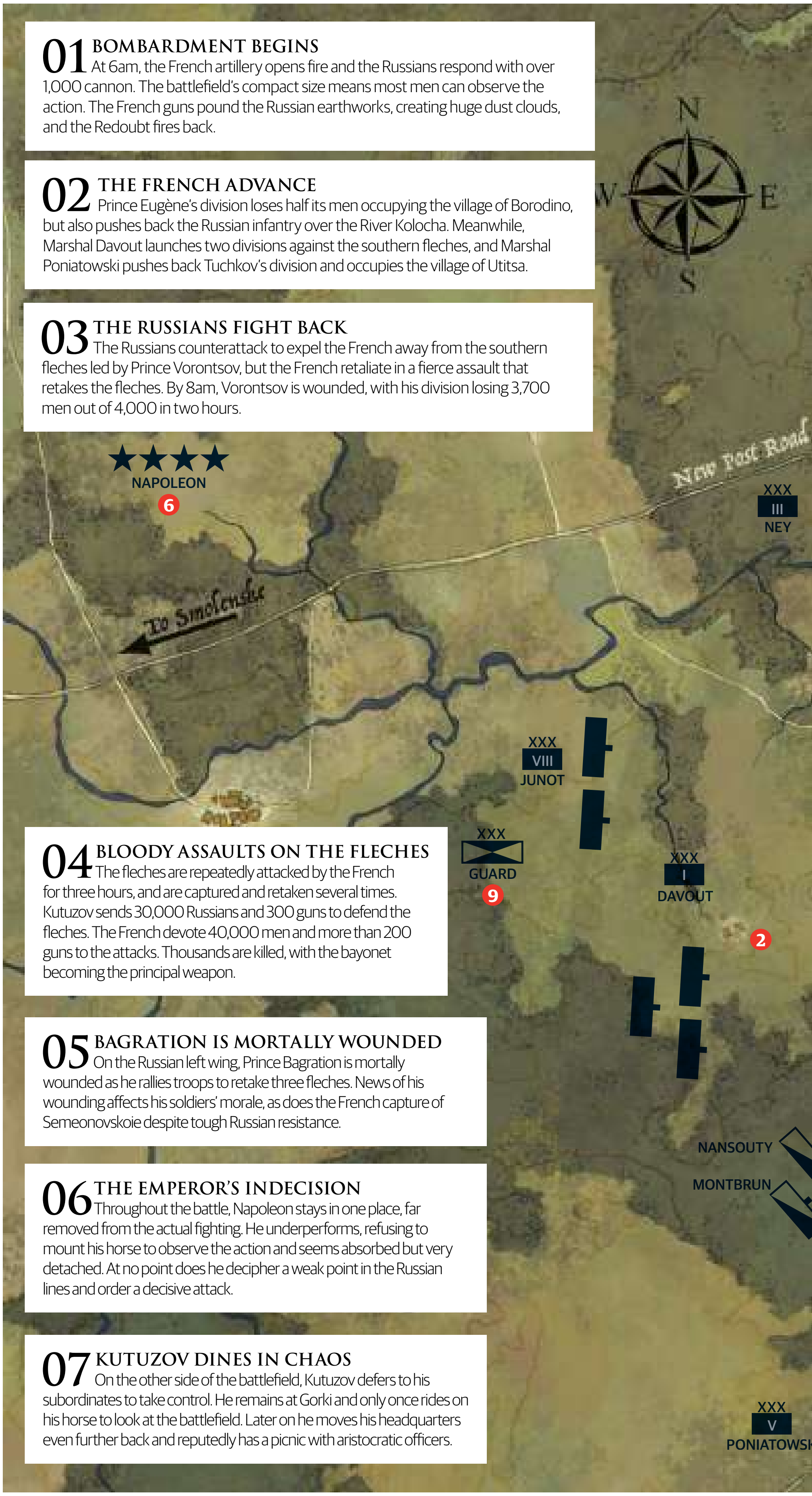
At 6am on 7 September, the French cannon opened up and the Russians immediately answered. Across the compact battlefield, over 1,000 guns were firing in a cannonade that would last all day. The French grande batterie pounded the fleches, which threw up swirling dust that mixed with smoke to create a confusing atmosphere with limited visibility. Despite this murderous exchange of fire, Napoleon's stepson Prince Eugène, on the Grande Armée's left flank, advanced with his division of French-Croat infantry, who swept the Russians out of Borodino village before occupying it. Two more of Eugène's divisions managed to cross the River Kolocha but were pushed back.

To the south, Marshal Davout launched two divisions against the fleches after a half-hour artillery bombardment, and two were taken after fierce hand-to-hand fighting. The defenders here lost 3,700 out of 4,000 men in the space of two hours. Tragically, the fleches became death traps for the new occupiers, who found their backs to the walls of the defences and vulnerable to Russian counterattacks. Over the next three hours, the fleches were stormed, captured and retaken several times as both sides threw in reinforcements. There were 70,000 men fighting for the fleches and the engagements became so intense that bayonets were used instead of muskets. General Jean Rapp recalled: "I had never seen such carnage."

Thousands were left dead among the fleches as attacks and counterattacks ebbed and flowed. At around 10am, Bagration was mortally wounded in the leg while rallying his troops and shortly afterwards the French cleared the fleches. Nonetheless, the Russians did not give up easily, as Captain Lubenkov later recalled: "It was a fight between ferocious tigers, not men. Once both sides had determined to win or die where they stood, they did not stop fighting when their muskets broke, but carried on, using butts and swords in terrible hand-to-hand combat."

The village of Semeonovskoie was now in French hands, and Marshals Ney and Murat demanded reinforcements to secure victory, but Napoleon was unresponsive. He was in uncharacteristically bad form, and for most of the day sat in a chair observing the battlefield from a distance. The smoke and dust clouds obscured his view and instead of riding closer to observe events, he silently dismissed reporting officers and stuck to viewing progress through a telescope. This conduct did not impress his subordinates, including a staff officer called Louis Lejeune who noted in his diary: "We were all surprised not to see the active man of Marengo, Austerlitz etc. We did not feel satisfied; our judgements were severe."

Meanwhile, the leadership was no better on the Russian side. Kutuzov's command was lethargic; he had no coherent strategy, spent most of the battle at his headquarters at Gorki reacting



01 BOMBARDMENT BEGINS

At 6am, the French artillery opens fire and the Russians respond with over 1,000 cannon. The battlefield's compact size means most men can observe the action. The French guns pound the Russian earthworks, creating huge dust clouds, and the Redoubt fires back.

02 THE FRENCH ADVANCE

Prince Eugène's division loses half its men occupying the village of Borodino, but also pushes back the Russian infantry over the River Kolocha. Meanwhile, Marshal Davout launches two divisions against the southern fleches, and Marshal Poniatowski pushes back Tuchkov's division and occupies the village of Utitsa.

03 THE RUSSIANS FIGHT BACK

The Russians counterattack to expel the French away from the southern fleches led by Prince Vorontsov, but the French retaliate in a fierce assault that retakes the fleches. By 8am, Vorontsov is wounded, with his division losing 3,700 men out of 4,000 in two hours.

04 BLOODY ASSAULTS ON THE FLECHES

The fleches are repeatedly attacked by the French for three hours, and are captured and retaken several times. Kutuzov sends 30,000 Russians and 300 guns to defend the fleches. The French devote 40,000 men and more than 200 guns to the attacks. Thousands are killed, with the bayonet becoming the principal weapon.

05 BAGRATION IS MORTALLY WOUNDED

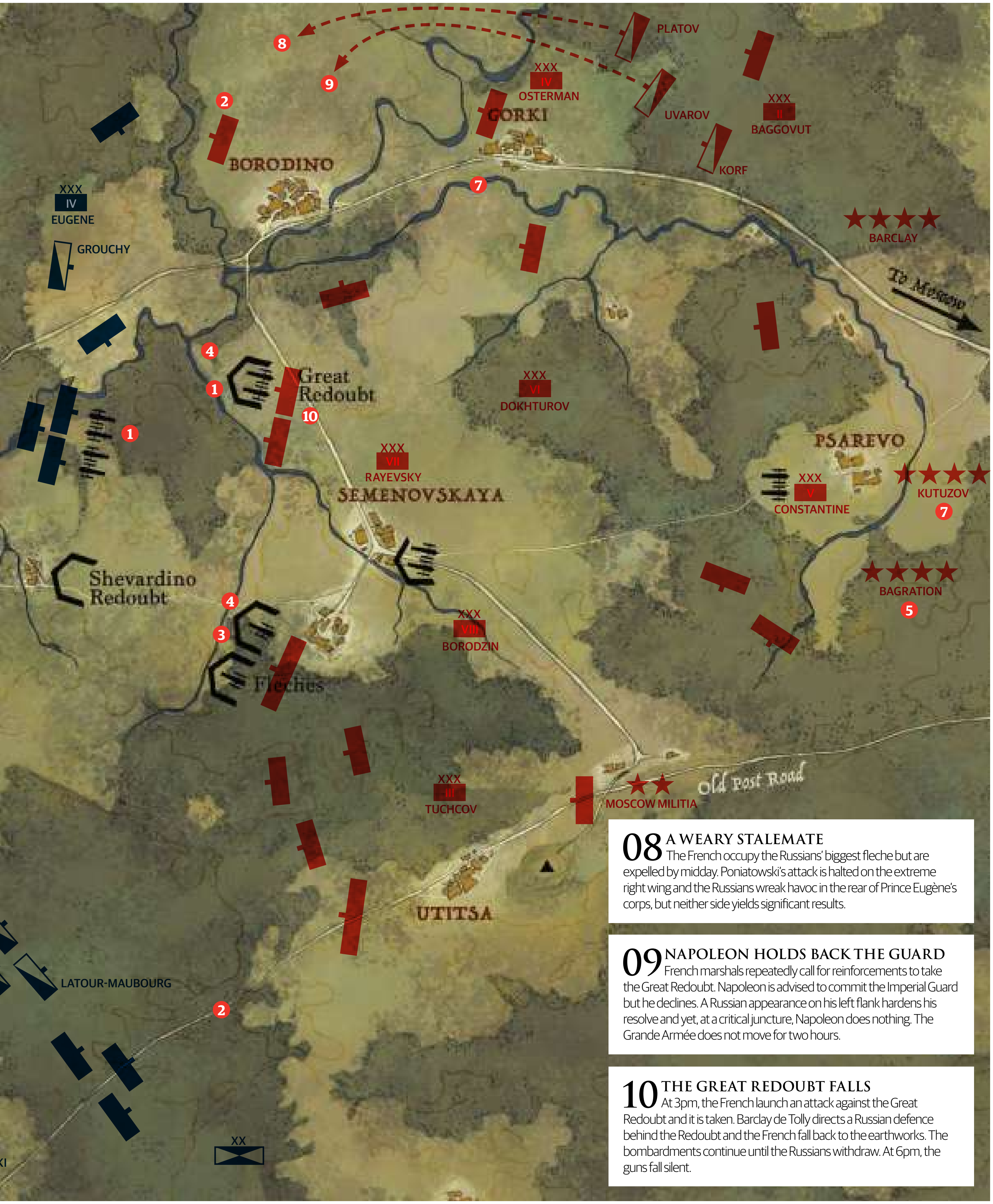
On the Russian left wing, Prince Bagration is mortally wounded as he rallies troops to retake three fleches. News of his wounding affects his soldiers' morale, as does the French capture of Semeonovskoie despite tough Russian resistance.

06 THE EMPEROR'S INDECISION

Throughout the battle, Napoleon stays in one place, far removed from the actual fighting. He underperforms, refusing to mount his horse to observe the action and seems absorbed but very detached. At no point does he decipher a weak point in the Russian lines and order a decisive attack.

07 KUTUZOV DINES IN CHAOS

On the other side of the battlefield, Kutuzov defers to his subordinates to take control. He remains at Gorki and only once rides on his horse to look at the battlefield. Later on he moves his headquarters even further back and reputedly has a picnic with aristocratic officers.


8
9
PLATOV
XXX
IV
OSTERMAN
UVAROV
XXX
II
BAGGOVUT
KORF
2
GORKI
BORODINO
XXX
IV
EUGENE
GROUCHY
7
BARCLAY
To Moscow
4
1
Great Redoubt
10
1
XXX
VI
DOKHTUROV
XXX
VII
RAYEVSKY
SEMENOVSKAYA
PSAREVO
XXX
V
CONSTANTINE
KUTUZOV
7
Shevardino Redoubt
4
3
Fleches
XXX
VIII
BORODZIN
BAGRATION
5
XXX
III
TUCHCOV
MOSCOW MILITIA
Old Post Road
UTITSA
LATOUR-MAUBOURG
2
XX
KI

08 A WEARY STALEMATE

The French occupy the Russians' biggest fleche but are expelled by midday. Poniatowski's attack is halted on the extreme right wing and the Russians wreak havoc in the rear of Prince Eugène's corps, but neither side yields significant results.

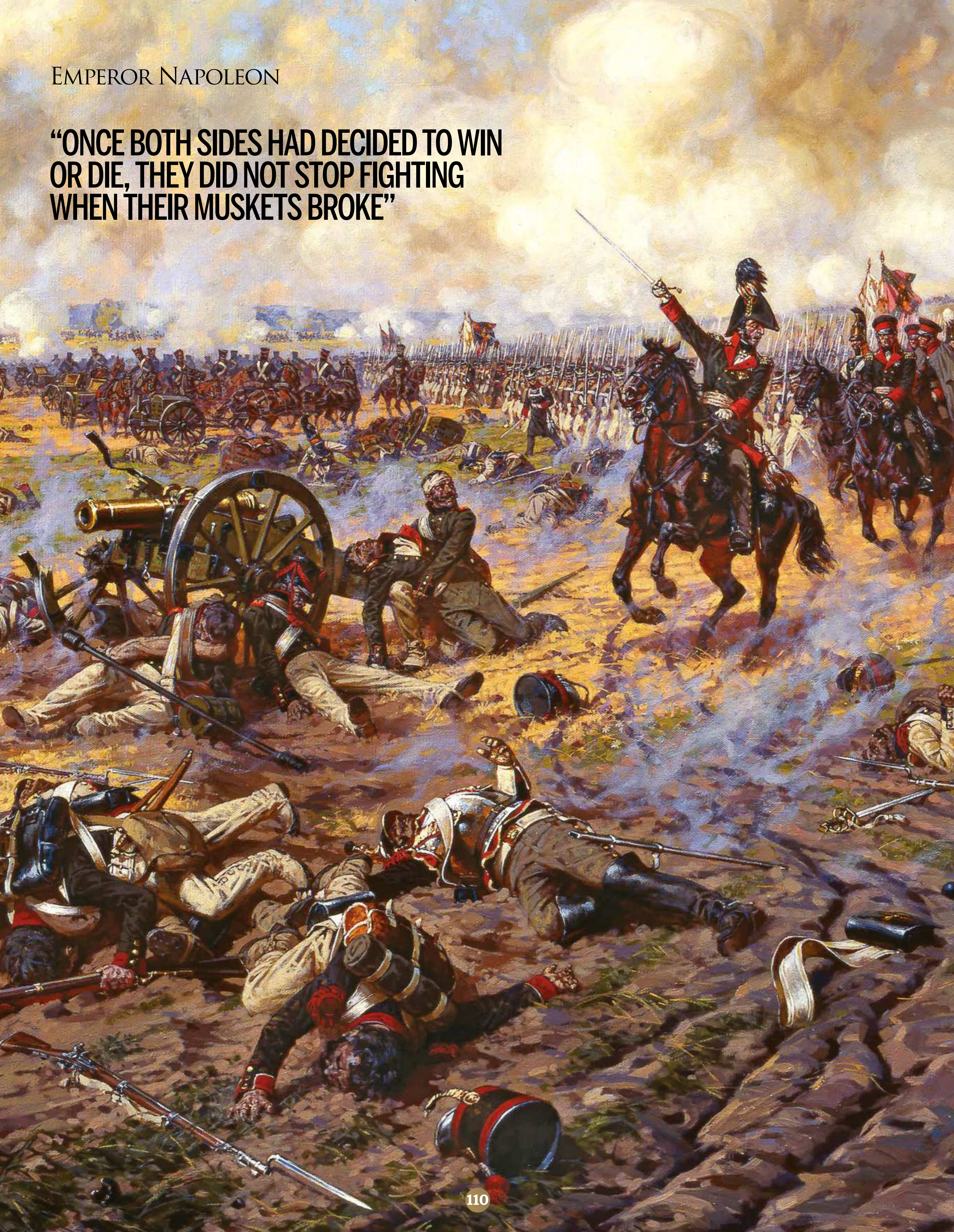
09 NAPOLEON HOLDS BACK THE GUARD

French marshals repeatedly call for reinforcements to take the Great Redoubt. Napoleon is advised to commit the Imperial Guard but he declines. A Russian appearance on his left flank hardens his resolve and yet, at a critical juncture, Napoleon does nothing. The Grande Armée does not move for two hours.

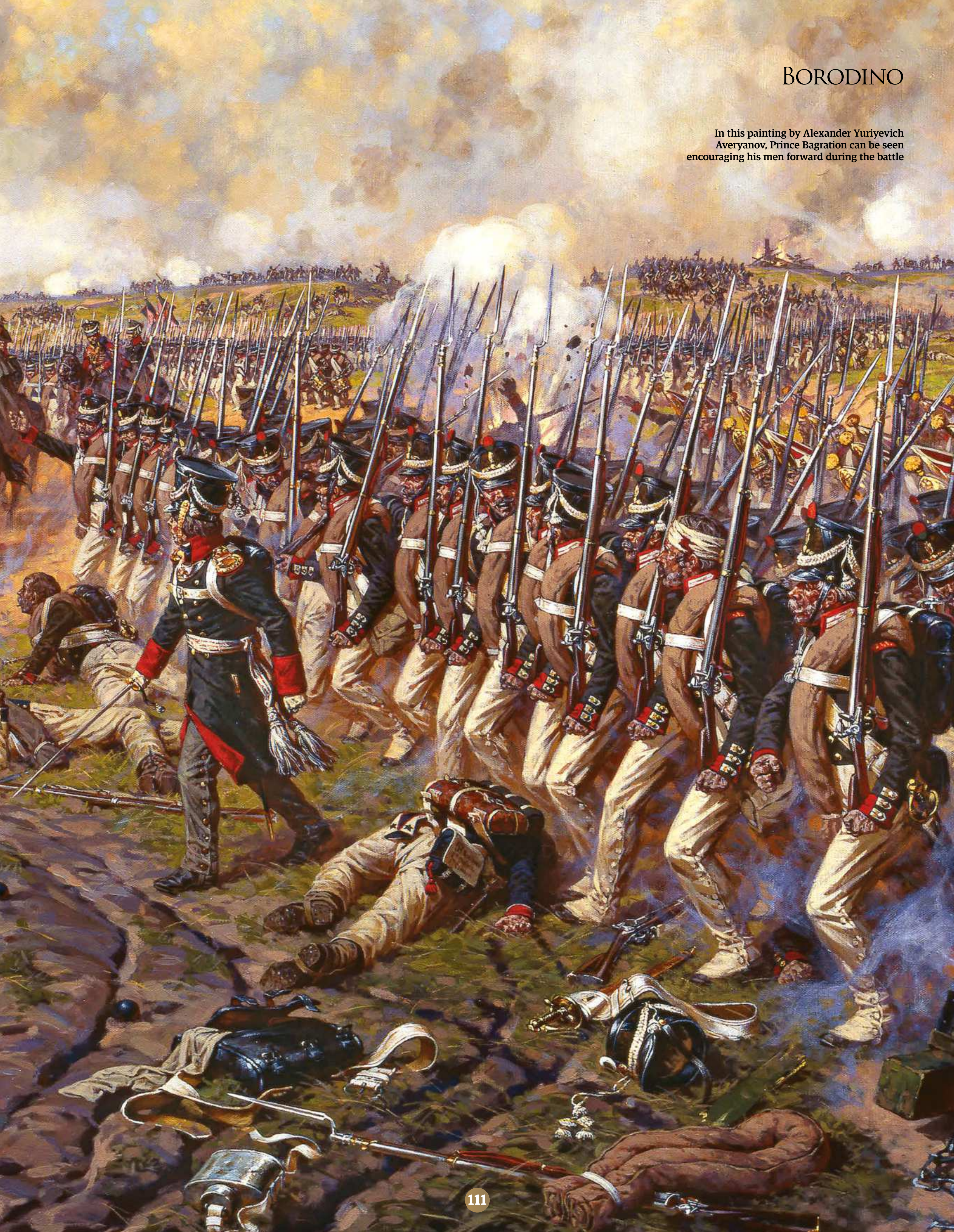
10 THE GREAT REDOUBT FALLS

At 3pm, the French launch an attack against the Great Redoubt and it is taken. Barclay de Tolly directs a Russian defence behind the Redoubt and the French fall back to the earthworks. The bombardments continue until the Russians withdraw. At 6pm, the guns fall silent.

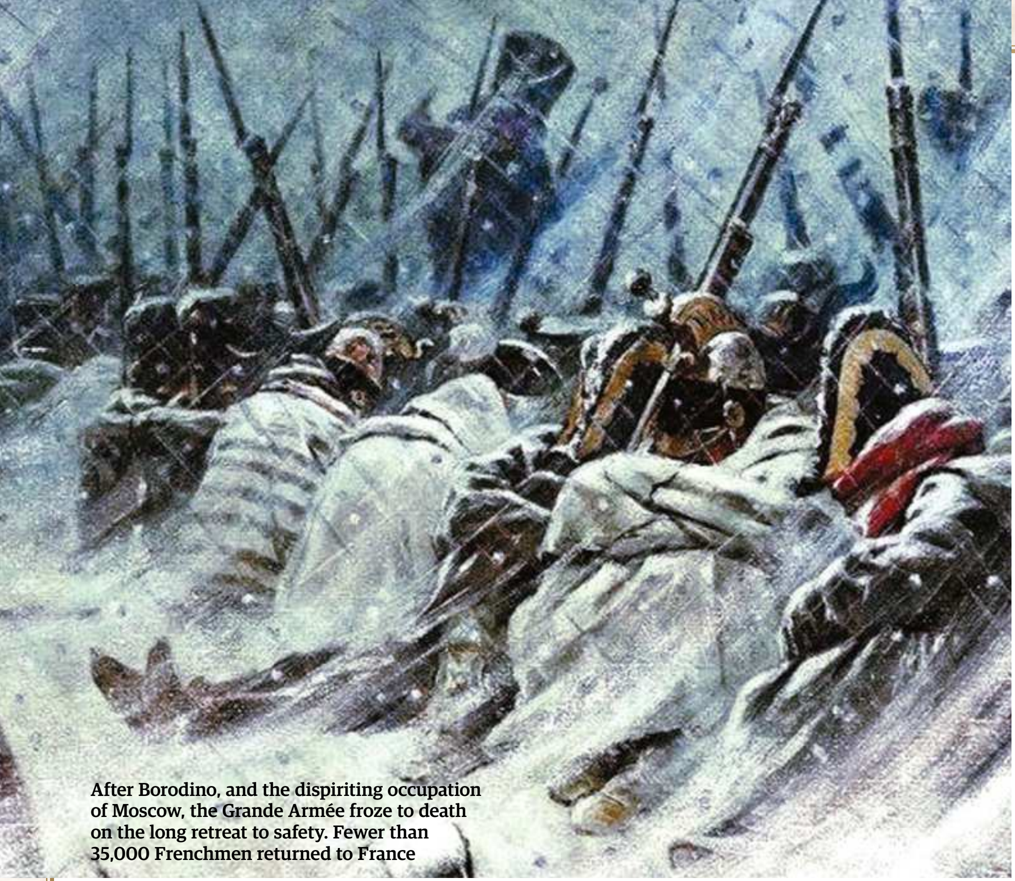
© Rocio Espin



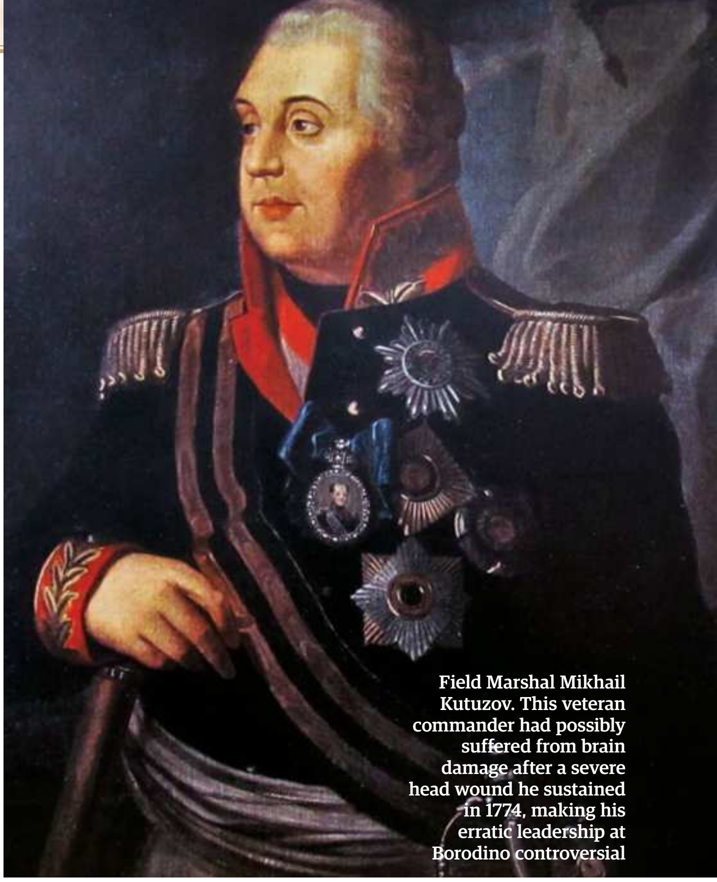
“ONCE BOTH SIDES HAD DECIDED TO WIN OR DIE, THEY DID NOT STOP FIGHTING WHEN THEIR MUSKETS BROKE”



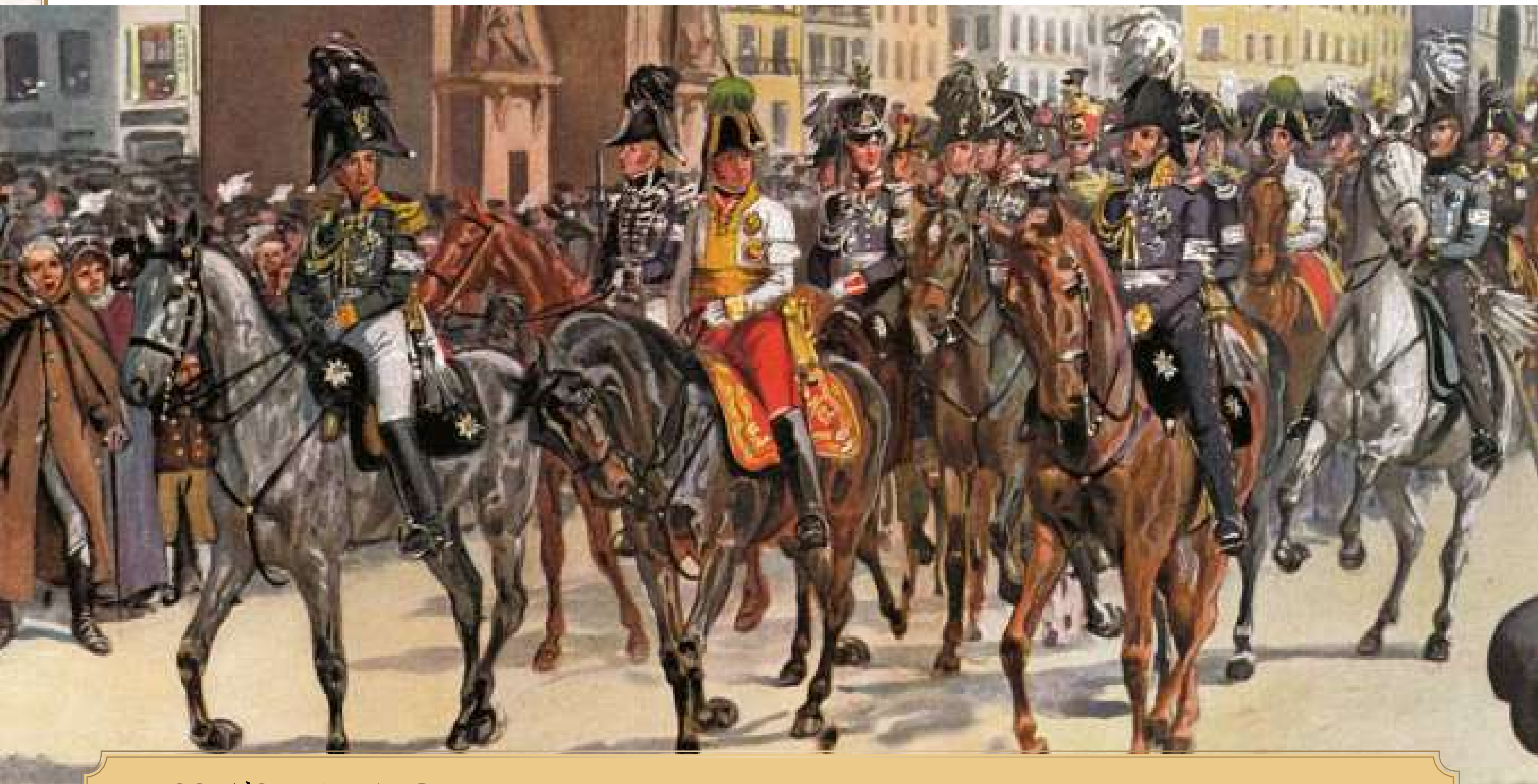
In this painting by Alexander Yuriyevich Averyanov, Prince Bagration can be seen encouraging his men forward during the battle



After Borodino, and the dispiriting occupation of Moscow, the Grande Armée froze to death on the long retreat to safety. Fewer than 35,000 Frenchmen returned to France



Field Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov. This veteran commander had possibly suffered from brain damage after a severe head wound he sustained in 1774, making his erratic leadership at Borodino controversial



RUSSIA'S REVENGE

Above: On 31 March 1814, the forces of Russia and Prussia were the first foreign armies to enter Paris since the English during the Hundred Years' War nearly 400 years previously

Despite being defeated, the baptism of fire at Borodino gave the Russian army a surge of confidence that it would not lose for the rest of the Napoleonic Wars. Meanwhile, the Grande Armée's misfortunes went from bad to worse, starting with the failed occupation of Moscow and then the disastrous retreat from the Russian capital. Throughout this time, the Russians grew in strength while Napoleon lost hundreds of thousands of men, as well as his aura of invincibility that had once terrified Europe. Dowager Empress Maria Fyodorovna said, "He is no longer an idol, but has descended to the rank of men, and as such, he can be fought by men."

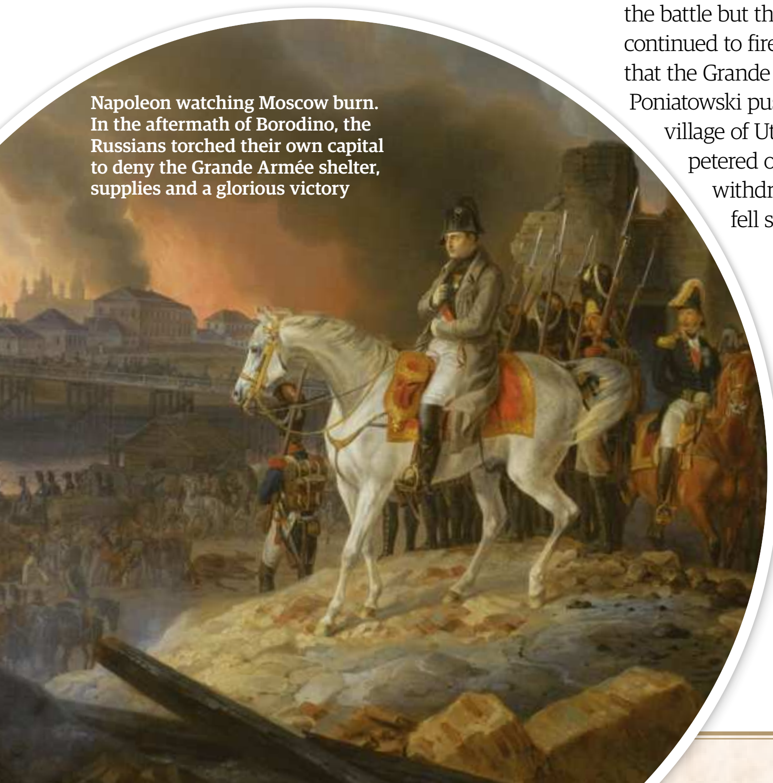
Throughout 1813, the Russians pushed into Europe and persuaded other powers to turn against France. Prussia and Austria, both reluctant allies of Napoleon, declared war on him in March and August respectively. Although Napoleon often defeated the new coalition, he was now on the back foot and was comprehensively defeated at Leipzig on 16 October. Paris itself fell on 31 March 1814 and Tsar Alexander rode into the capital to surprising acclaim. A Russian officer, Pavel Pushin wrote, "All of them expressed genuine happiness, shouting, 'Vive Alexander!' Just yesterday these same people were yelling, 'Vive Napoleon'." The wheel had come full circle and Napoleon abdicated on 6 April.

to appeals and bad reports and often deferred to Quartermaster General Karl von Toll saying "Karl, whatever you say, I will do." Carl von Clausewitz observed: "He appeared destitute of inward activity, of any clear view of surrounding occurrences, of any liveliness of perception, or independence of action." Kutuzov rode out to observe the battle only once and apparently moved his headquarters back to host a picnic with aristocratic officers.

Nonetheless the battle raged on. French efforts were concentrated against the Great Redoubt, which finally fell at around 10am. Captain François recalled: "We hopped over the roundshot as it bounded through the grass. A line of Russian soldiers tried to halt us, but we delivered a volley at 30 paces and walked over them. The gunners tried to beat us back with ramrods and levering spikes. We fought hand-to-hand with them and they were formidable adversaries." Despite this, the Russians retook the Redoubt and few French soldiers survived.

Elsewhere on the Russian right wing, Generals Platov and Uvarov launched a cavalry raid into the French rear across the Kolocha that wreaked havoc but, like elsewhere, they were swept back. Their attack seemed in vain but it did have an unforeseen consequence. The time was between 11am and midday and the French attacks had temporarily stopped. New Russian defence lines were being formed and they had retaken the Redoubt. The Grande Armée could not push the advantage home and there were constant calls for reinforcements, but for Napoleon this meant sending in his elite regiment, the Imperial Guard, who numbered approximately 25,000 men. They had not seen action but Napoleon was reluctant to send in his last reserve. He was on the verge of deploying them but the Russian cavalry appeared and Napoleon called a halt.

The Guard was never used, but had Napoleon deployed them at this critical point, when many of the Russian defences had been breached, the battle might have been decisively won. As it was, the bloodshed dragged on. Even during a temporary 'pause', the cannonade continued and ripped into the static troops. Captain Jean de Marlots recalled appalling sights such as when he was talking to one of his subalterns: "Just as he was telling me that he lacked for nothing, except perhaps a glass of water, a cannonball tore him in two." Not long after that: "I gave my horse to a trooper to hold for half a minute, and the man was promptly killed."



Napoleon watching Moscow burn. In the aftermath of Borodino, the Russians torched their own capital to deny the Grande Armée shelter, supplies and a glorious victory

TAKING THE REDOUBT

This terrible interval ended just after 2pm when the French began assembling for an assault on the Redoubt. 200 cannon were used to pound the earthworks before an advance by three divisions of infantry and two masses of heavy cavalry flanked on either side. The cavalry overtook the infantry and charged around the Redoubt before pouring in and meeting a waiting mass of muskets and bayonets. As the casualties mounted, they were simply replaced by more soldiers.

Watching the scene from the rear, artilleryman Colonel Griois said: "It would be difficult to convey our feelings as we watched this brilliant feat of arms. Every one of us would have liked to help the cavalry which we saw leaping over ditches and scrambling up ramparts under a hail of canister shots, and a roar of joy resounded on all sides as they became masters of the Redoubt." However, it was a different story inside, as Colonel Meerheimb recalled: "Horsemen and footsoldiers, gripped by a frenzy of slaughter, were butchering each other without any semblance of order."

At 3.30pm, the Grande Armée occupied the Redoubt, but the Russian forces reorganised and formed squares immediately behind it. Their defiance was largely down to Barclay de Tolly who, despite his demotion, remained calm throughout the battle and assembled enough cavalry to launch a counter-charge and bombard the French who now occupied the Redoubt. The Russians had now technically lost the battle but they did not easily give in. The cannon continued to fire for hours and the only progress that the Grande Armée made was when Marshal Poniatowski pushed the Russians back beyond the village of Utitsa. The throes of the battle finally petered out at around 6pm when the Russians withdrew a kilometre away and the guns fell silent.

REMAINING CARNAGE

The battlefield that Napoleon belatedly surveyed was a horrendous sight. The ground was littered with the mutilated dead and wounded. Thanks to the continuous artillery fire, severed limbs and exposed entrails everywhere – of men and horses. The worst sight of all was the grisly Redoubt, which, according to one officer, "...exceeded the worst horrors one could ever dream of. The approaches, ditches and earthworks had disappeared under a mound of dead and dying, an average of six to eight men were heaped on top of one other."

There were hardly any prisoners taken, which was unusual in a period when victory was measured by the number of prisoners of war. "The number of dead testified to the courage of the vanquished, rather than to the scale of the victory," the Comte de Ségur later commented. For Napoleon, this was a victory, but at a terrible price, and his army was too exhausted to pursue the Russians. One officer of the Imperial Guard recalled that the men spent the night, "...in the mud, without fires, surrounded by dead and wounded, whose plaintive cries broke one's heart." On the other side the Russians were in high spirits despite having been narrowly defeated. Prince Piotr Viazemsky did not feel beaten and was proud to have stood up to Napoleon: "Everyone was still in such a rapturous state of mind, they were all such recent witnesses of the bravery of our troops, that the thought of failure, or even only partial failure, would not enter our minds."

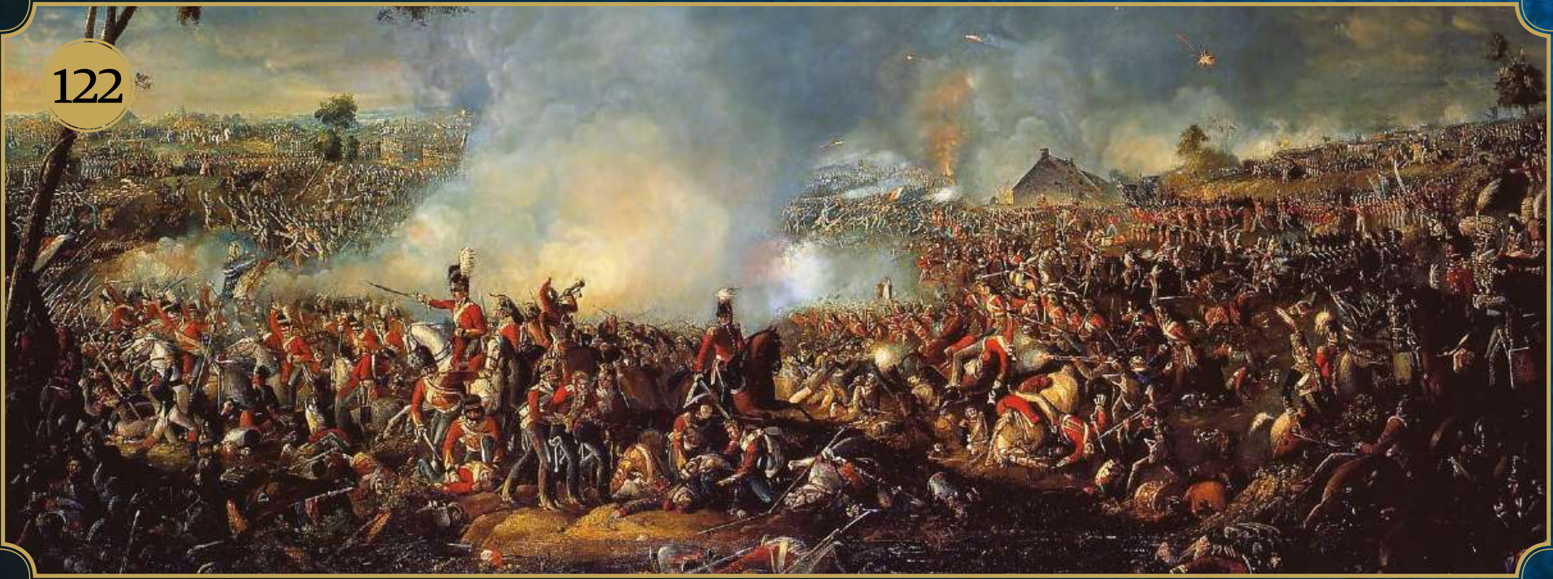
The cost was enormous. Borodino became the worst single day's fighting in recorded history, a notorious title it held until the Battle of the Somme in 1916 during the First World War. The Russians suffered casualties between 38,000-58,000 men including 29 generals. Entire units virtually ceased to exist, such as the Shirvansk Regiment, which started the battle with 1,300 troops and was reduced to just 98 men by 3pm.

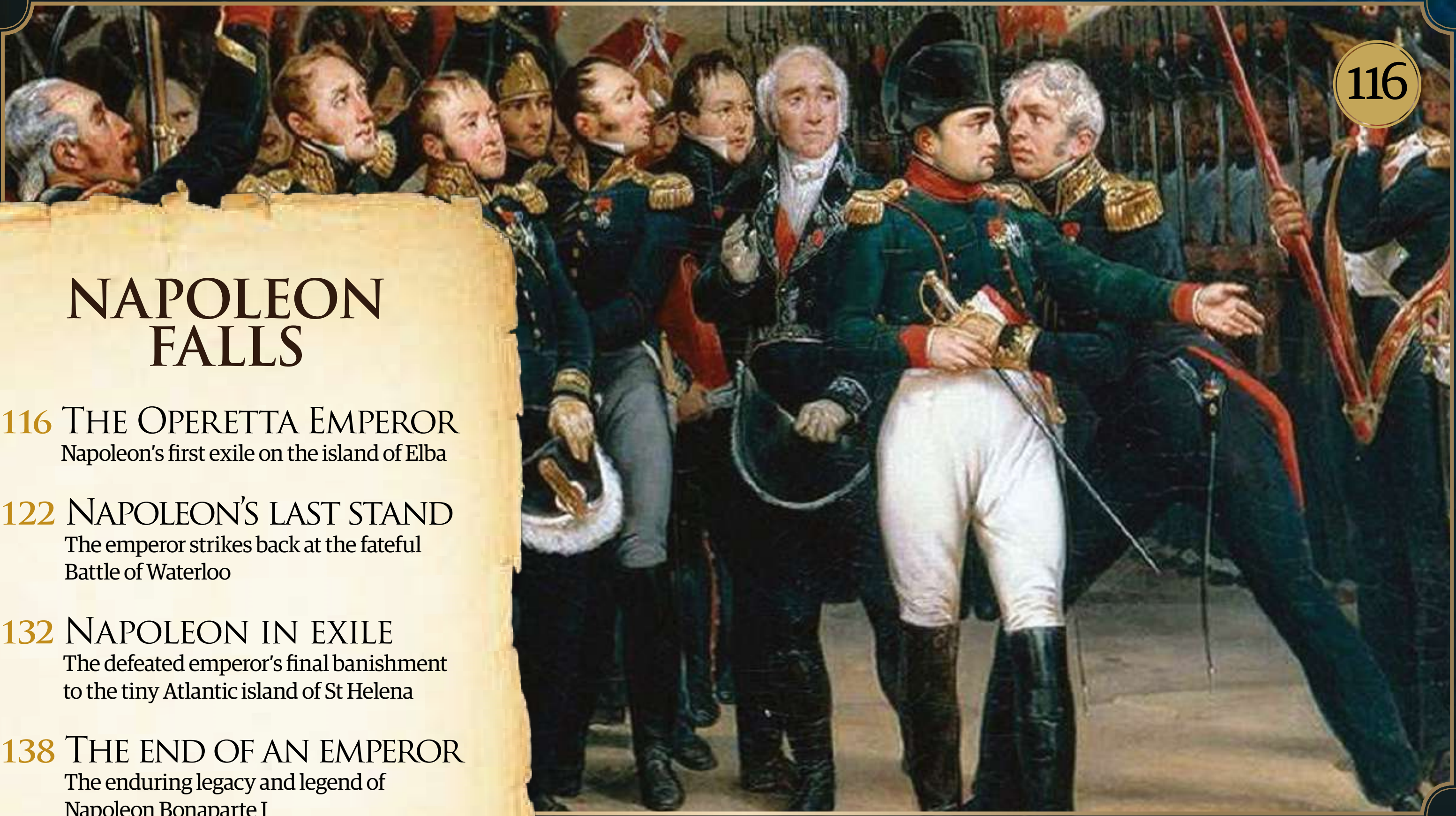
The Grande Armée had comparatively lighter losses of 28,000, including 11 dead generals, but all of these men could not be easily replaced so far from friendly territory. Napoleon had also virtually destroyed his cavalry, with dire consequences for mobility and logistics. In addition, it has been calculated that the Grande Armée alone had fired 60,000-91,000 artillery rounds and 1.4 million musket shots. This roughly averages out at 100 cannon and 2,300 musket discharges per minute. One modern historian has likened the chaos to, "...a fully loaded 747 crashing, with no survivors, every five minutes for eight hours."

Napoleon may have won this gruelling battle but his army was irretrievably weakened and he found himself cut off far from his main supply base. Nonetheless his pride would not yet permit a retreat and his exhausted force continued on their march towards Moscow. Soon the Grande Armée occupied a deserted and deliberately torched capital, and when Napoleon came to the realisation that Tsar Alexander would never seek terms, he ignominiously retreated back through the merciless Russian winter and condemned what was left of his army to a frozen oblivion. It is estimated that between June 1812 and February 1813, about 1 million people on all sides died because of the campaign, with only 35,000 Frenchmen ultimately returning to France. The pivot of this nightmare was that neither Borodino nor Napoleonic Europe ever truly recovered.

Images: Alamy

NAPOLEON FALLS





NAPOLEON FALLS

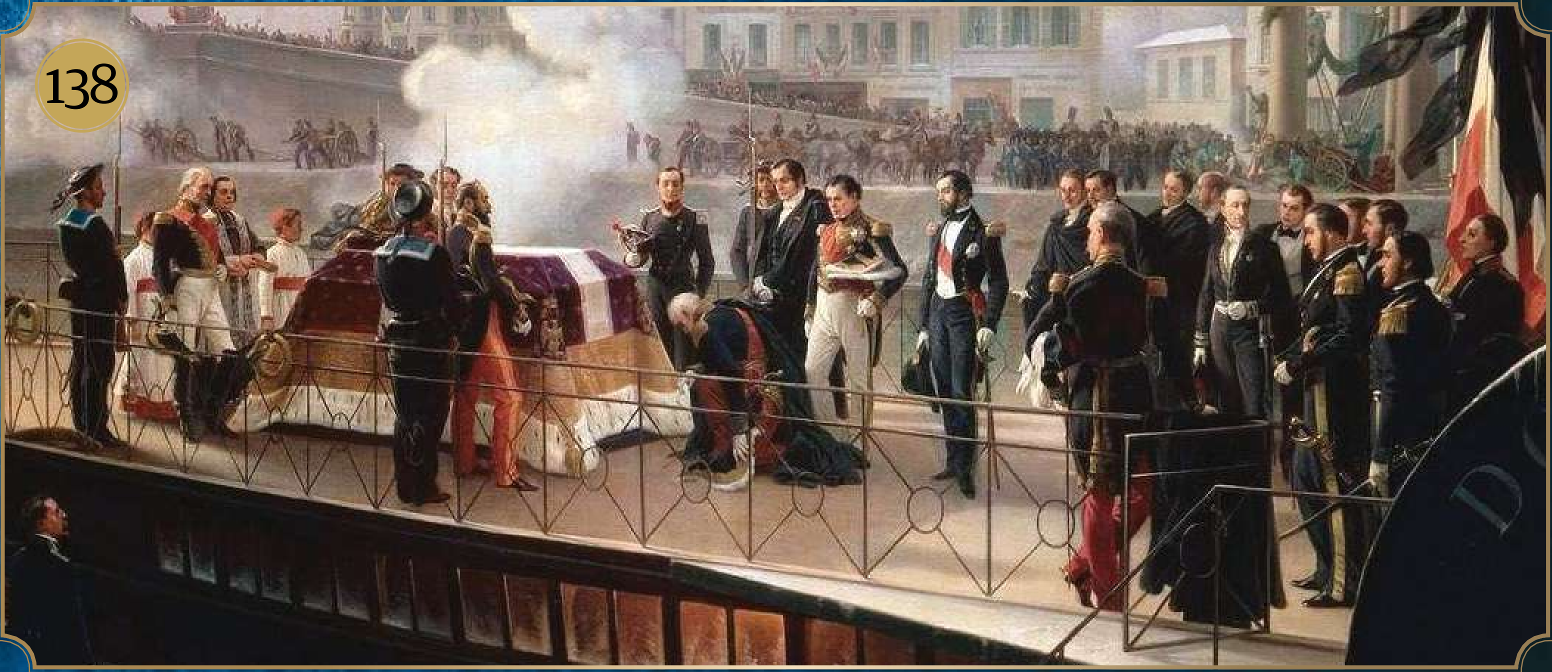
116 The Operetta Emperor
Napoleon's first exile on the island of Elba

122 Napoleon's last stand
The emperor strikes back at the fateful Battle of Waterloo

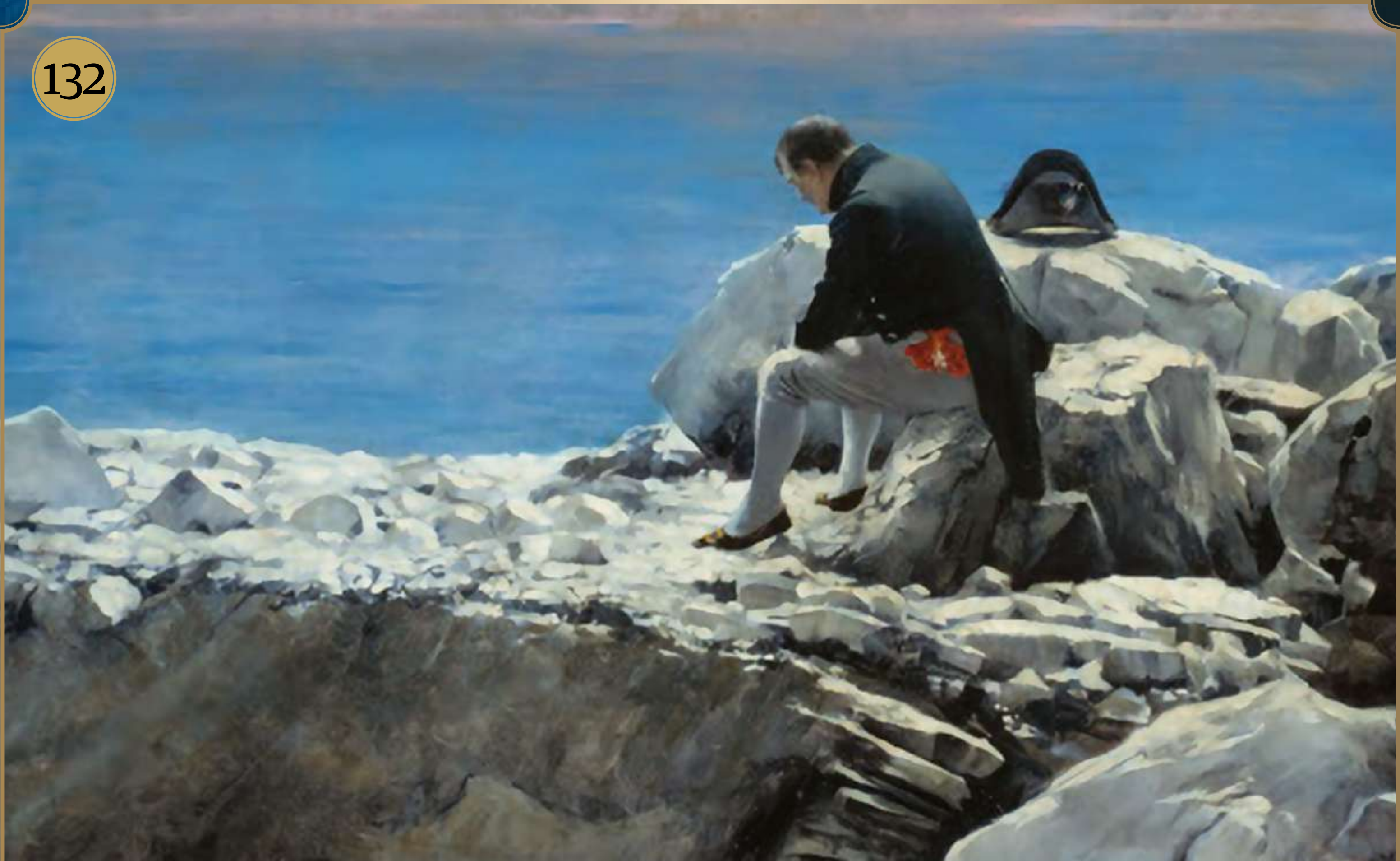
132 Napoleon in exile
The defeated emperor's final banishment to the tiny Atlantic island of St Helena

138 The end of an emperor
The enduring legacy and legend of Napoleon Bonaparte I

138



132



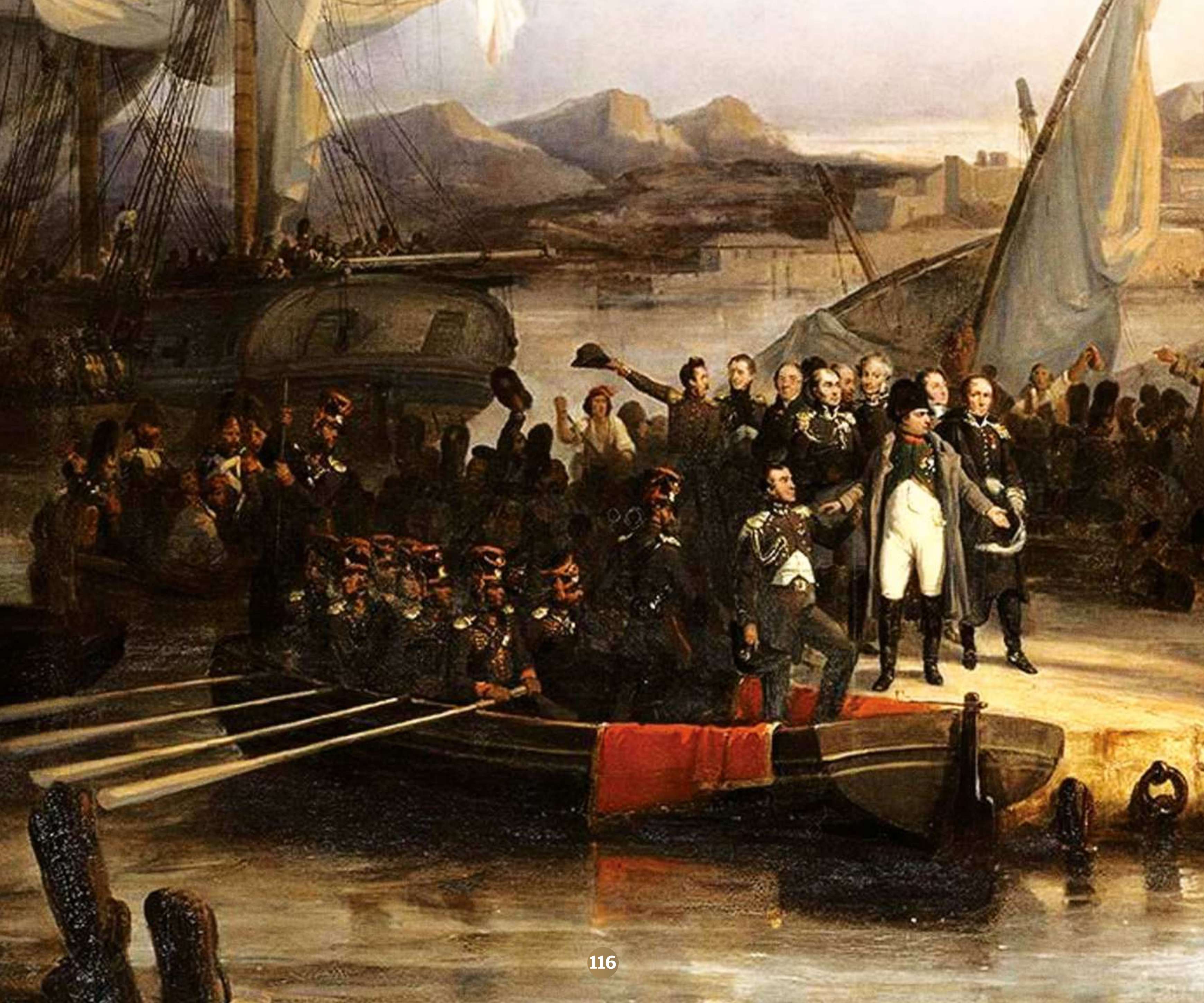
THE OPERETTA EMPEROR

Could an island hold an emperor's interest? Elba, and Europe, would soon find out

Words **Edoardo Albert**

On the evening of 28 April 1814, Napoleon embarked upon the barge of His Majesty's frigate Undaunted. The emperor was going into exile, although in exile he would still be an emperor. But his empire, once stretching from the Atlantic to the Baltic, was to be reduced to an island of 224 square kilometres in the Tyrrhenian Sea, ten kilometres from Italy. According to the terms of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, Napoleon Bonaparte was to abdicate as Emperor of the French and become Emperor of Elba instead.

Today, Elba is part of Italy but through history it has changed hands many times and, at the start of the 19th century, it had become a French possession. However, under the terms of the treaty, Elba became the personal possession of Napoleon. Lying between Corsica and Italy, there's no record of Napoleon having visited in his youth but it was close enough

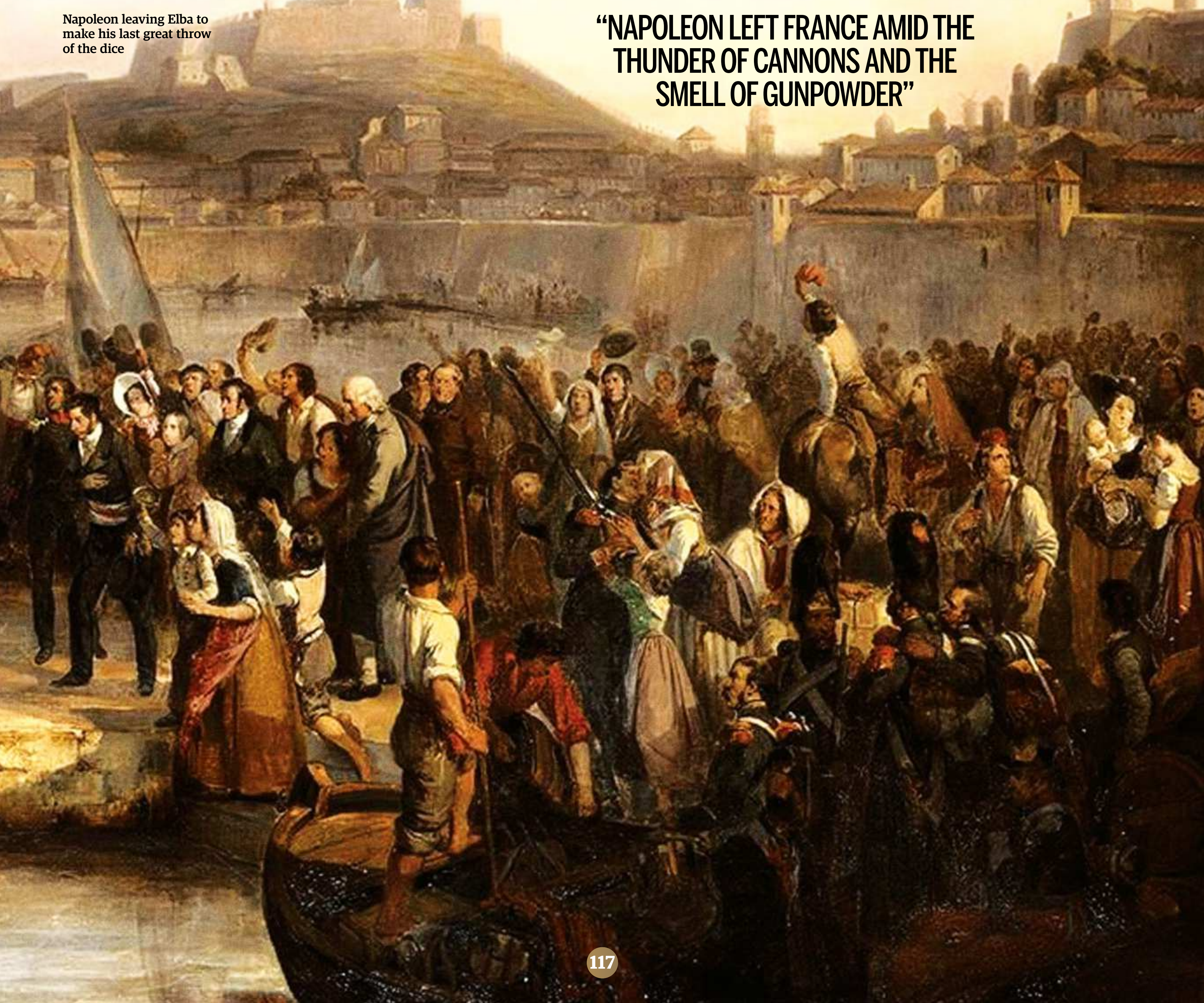


to at least offer a familiar environment.Under the circumstances in France, it was the best he could have hoped for but even so, he took his time getting there.

First, Napoleon took eight days to reach Fréjus on France's Mediterranean coast, after leaving Fontainebleau. The fallen emperor spent much of the journey travelling in disguise to avoid Royalist assassins and the harangues of ordinary people. The original plan had been for Napoleon to embark on the ship that was to take him into exile from St Tropez, but he insisted that it should be from Fréjus that he leave France. Fréjus was where he had landed, in 1799, after his return from Egypt at the start of his extraordinary ascent to power. Now it would witness his fall. Even so, he could barely tear himself away. It was only when the captain of the Undaunted, Sir Thomas Ussher, arrived at the inn in Fréjus where he was staying to inform him that the barge was waiting that Napoleon could bring himself to leave.

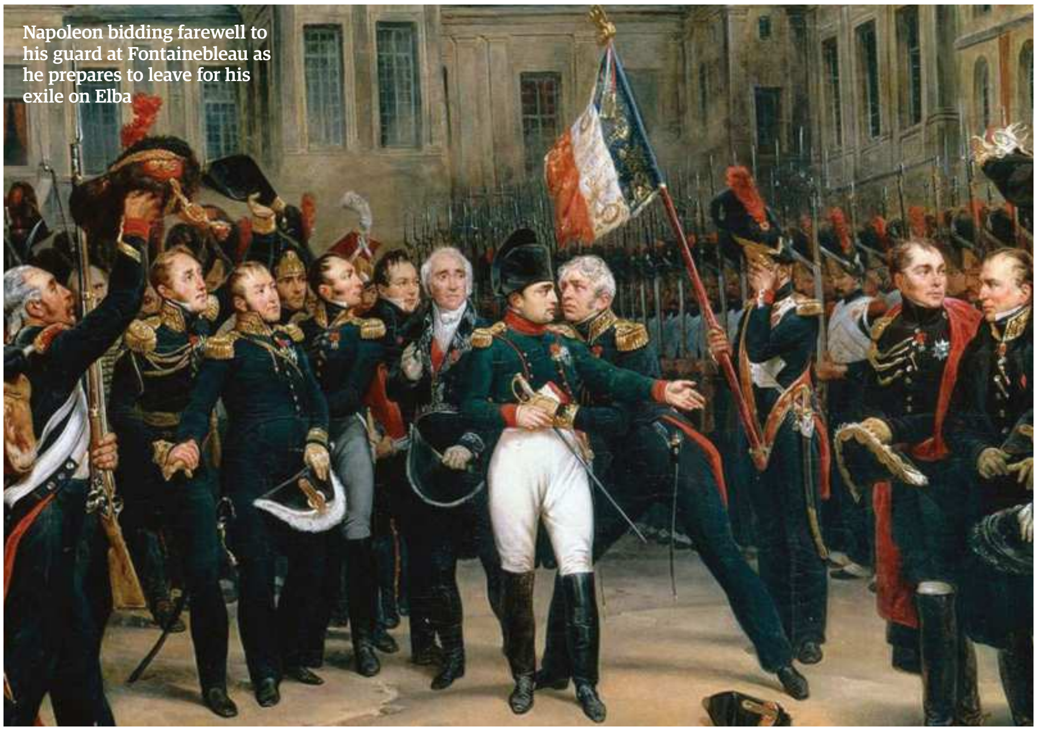
But, ever the stickler for imperial pretension, Napoleon insisted that, as a sovereign, he be given a 21-gun salute upon boarding the Undaunted. Despite naval regulations stating there should be no gun salutes after sunset, the captain of the frigate acceded to his demands and Napoleon left France amid the thunder of cannons and the smell of gunpowder. Three days later, on 1 May, the Undaunted came within sight of Corsica. Napoleon came onto the bridge of the frigate and watched his homeland pass by. But there was to be no port of call there and, on the evening of 3 May, the Undaunted set anchor in Portoferraio, Elba's main town and port. The next day Napoleon came ashore to take possession of his new kingdom. The mayor, Pietro Traditi, gave Napoleon the keys to the island but the occasion rendered the poor man so nervous that he could not say a word.

Napoleon, with his usual attention to detail, had already designed a new flag for his island realm: a white background with a red stripe running diagonally across it, the stripe marked by three golden bees. It remains the flag of Elba to this day. The population greeted their new ruler with enthusiasm, although that enthusiasm was newly come by. When the news had initially filtered through to the Elbans that they were being given as a gift to Napoleon, there had been some protests but these quickly died away as a perennially poor people were struck by the realisation that the emperor in exile would bring much needed business and employment to the island. The golden bees of the new flag were exactly what the island's inhabitants hoped for. So they crowded around their new ruler as he processed into Portoferraio, making his way to the church where a Te Deum was offered to God in thanksgiving for Napoleon's safe arrival. Then, the



Napoleon leaving Elba to make his last great throw of the dice

"NAPOLEON LEFT FRANCE AMID THE THUNDER OF CANNONS AND THE SMELL OF GUNPOWDER"


Napoleon bidding farewell to his guard at Fontainebleau as he prepares to leave for his exile on Elba

Emperor of Elba was shown to his new quarters: the Biscotteria, a biscuit factory that had been hastily converted into an imperial residence. For Napoleon, it must all have seemed a long way from the Tuileries Palace in Paris.

THE BEST LITTLE EMPEROR IN THE WORLD

At the height of his power, Napoleon had ruled an empire encompassing over 2 million square kilometres. Now he had 224. But they were going to be the best ruled 224 square kilometres in the world. On 5 May, the day after his arrival, Napoleon woke at 4am, went to inspect the defences of Portoferraio and did not return for breakfast until 10am. This was to be the mark of Napoleon's time on Elba: ceaseless activity and movement. A week later, Napoleon toured the island and selected a villa better suited to his eminence: the Palazzina dei Mulini, overlooking his new capital (these days it's a museum, commemorating the emperor's stay on Elba, complete with the 1,100 books that Napoleon, a voracious reader, brought from France).

As Emperor of Elba, Napoleon's routine was fairly strict. He would wake at four, read dispatches, dictate letters, look at the papers and walk in the garden before a nap and riding out to see the various building projects he had initiated on the island. Then came a late breakfast, at ten or eleven o'clock, followed by some time alone reading, bathing, and conversations with his staff. Sometime about four in the afternoon, Napoleon would normally go out in his calash, a light carriage, stopping to speak to any Elbans along the way who wished to petition their emperor. Returning to the Palazzina dei Mulini by the early evening, there would be a formal audience for visitors (there was a steady stream of tourists, many from England, wanting to see for themselves this man who had held Europe in thrall for so long). Dinner was taken between six and eight, then Napoleon would play cards with his mother - who had come to Elba to share in her son's exile - or chess, before retiring between nine and ten.

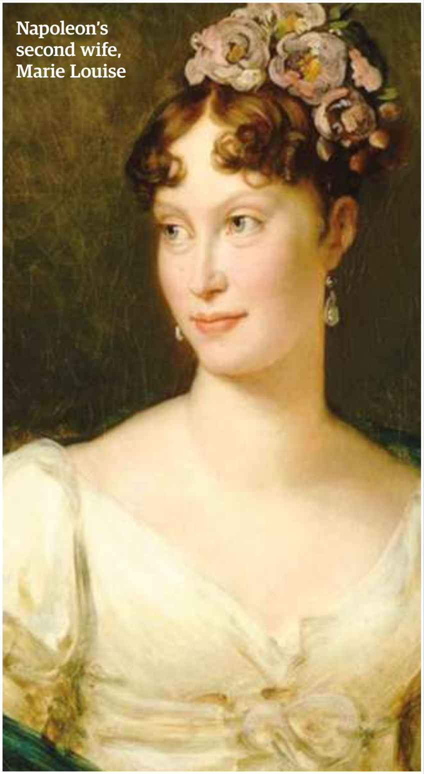
For a man of the emperor's relentless energy, it's clear that the greatest danger he faced on Elba was boredom. To stave it off, Napoleon became involved in the tiniest detail of his Lilliputian realm: he organised rubbish collections, passed laws for the collection of night soil, regulated what gardeners should be paid, improved customs and excise, instituted plans to irrigate the plains of Lacona, decreed that valleys were to be reforested and olive trees planted, set up an inspectorate of roads and bridges, and decreed that no more than five children could sleep in a bed. The obsessive attention to detail that had seen Napoleon ask to see several years of the records of the laundry at the Tuileries Palace in Paris after being given a dirty napkin at dinner still drove the man. However, at some level Napoleon felt the futility of all this action poured into such a small realm, for his time on Elba was marked by an initial enthusiasm for a variety of building projects, only for him to abandon the project when faced with difficulties or the fact of his own boredom at what he was attempting to achieve.

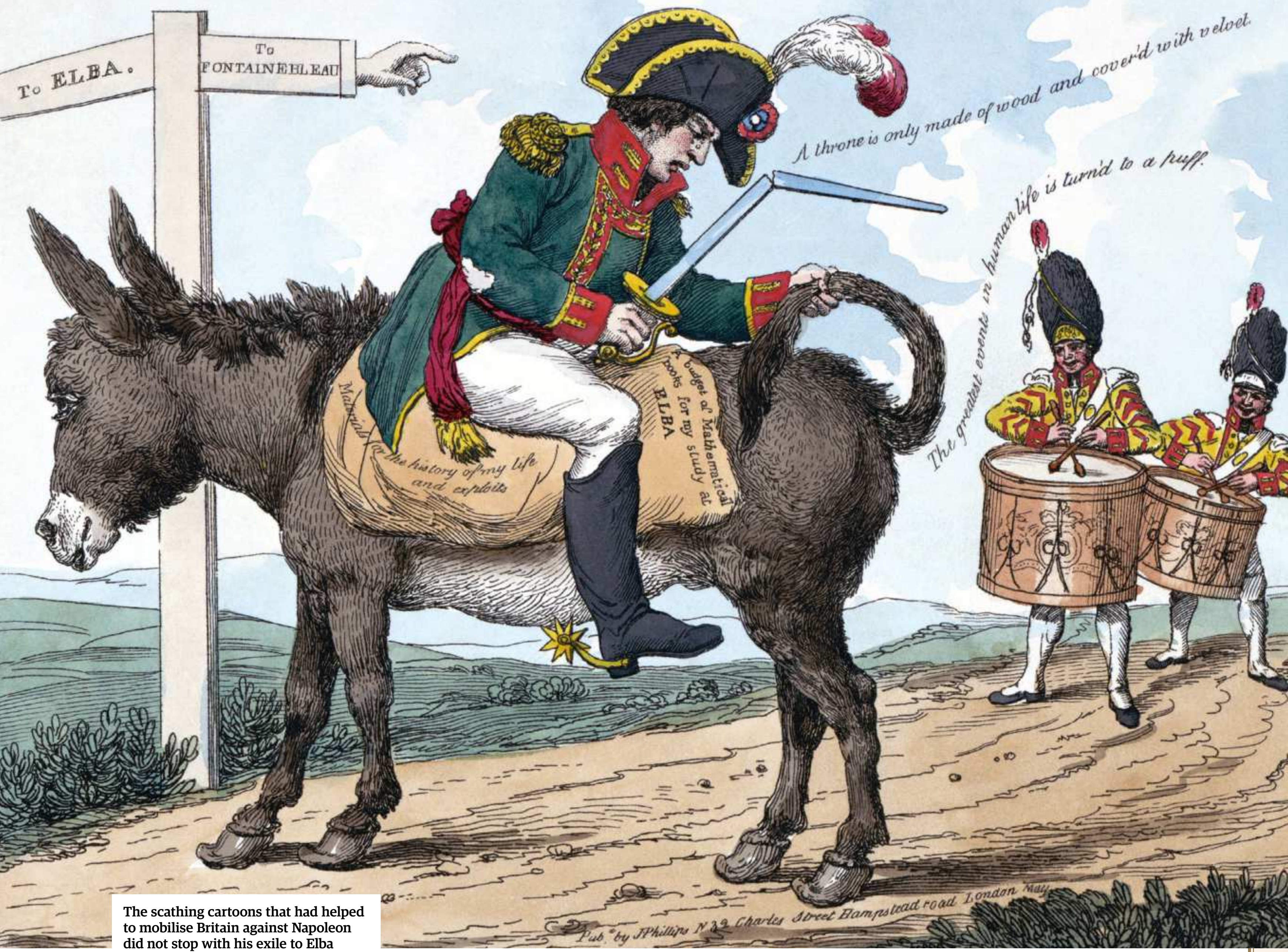
Napoleon's difficulties were exacerbated by money worries. Under the terms of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, the restored Bourbon King of France, Louis XVIII, was supposed to pay an annual stipend of two million francs to Napoleon to help cover his expenses. These were considerable. Napoleon had brought to Elba a large household of staff

WIFE ABROAD

On Elba, Napoleon was joined by his mother, a sister and, for a couple of weeks, one of his mistresses. But the woman he really wanted to join him on the island, his wife, Marie Louise, never came. He had not seen her, nor their son, since 25 January 1814 but they had maintained intermittent contact by letter. With Napoleon Jr, Marie Louise had left France for Vienna, returning to her father, Emperor Francis of Austria. Napoleon certainly hoped to be reunited with Marie Louise and her letters show that at first she intended to join him in exile. But Francis and his advisors, notably Prince Metternich, subtly poisoned the rather shallow well of Marie Louise's feelings for her husband. First, they brought her the news that Napoleon had been so grief-stricken when he heard of the death of his first wife, Joséphine, on 29 May 1814, that he had shut himself into his room for two days. Then Metternich instructed his aide, a one-eyed but handsome officer named Adam Albert von Neipperg to keep Marie Louise from going to Elba 'by any means whatsoever'. While they took the waters in spa town Aix-les-Bains, Napoleon wrote to her in ever more imperious terms that she should come to him. Marie Louise baulked at this command and, returning to Vienna, she and von Neipperg became lovers, subsequently marrying and producing three children.

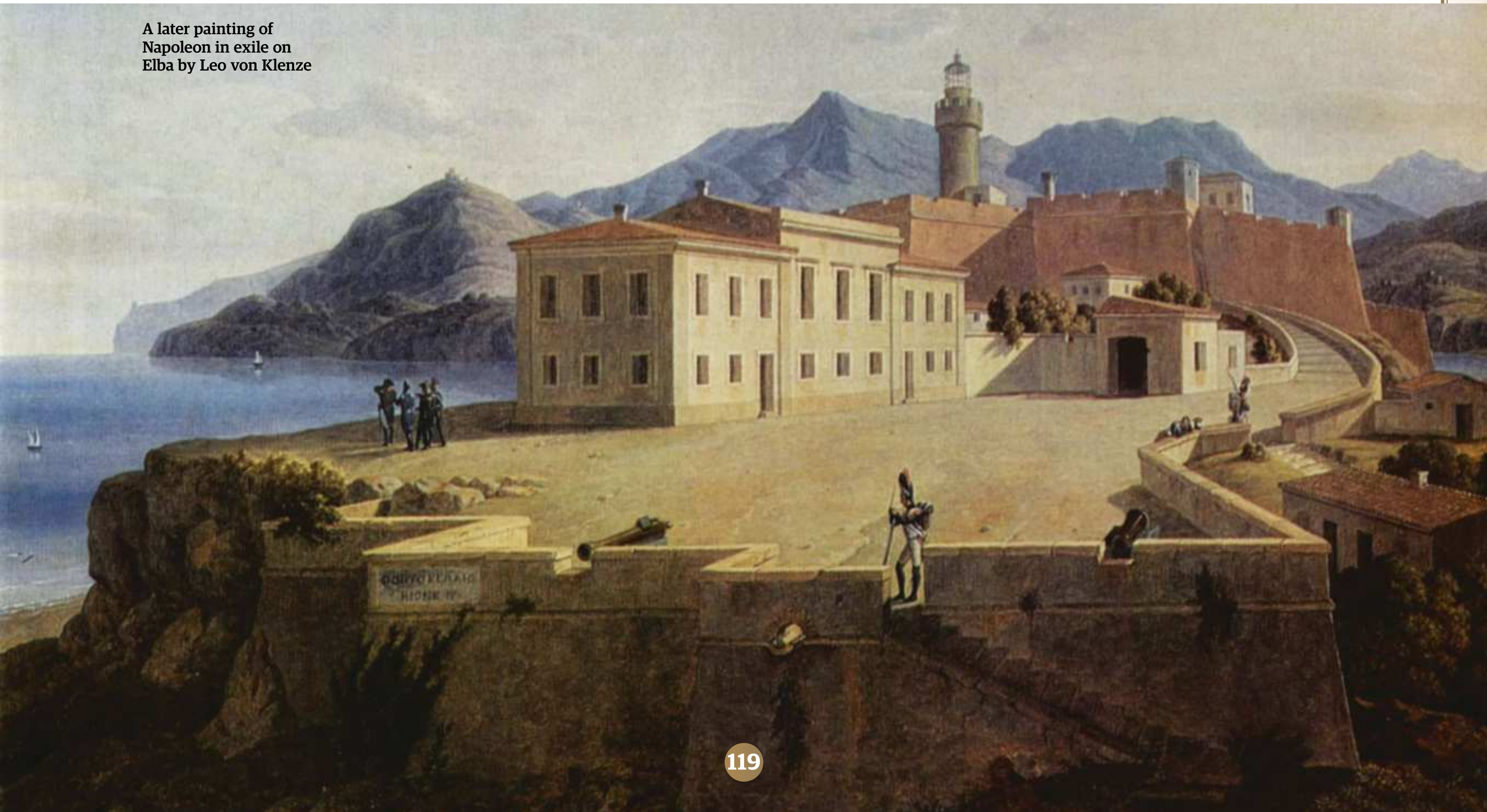
> “HIS WIFE, MARIE LOUISE, NEVER CAME”


Napoleon's second wife, Marie Louise


To ELBA.
To FONTAINEBLEAU
A throne is only made of wood and cover'd with velvet.
The greatest events in human life is turn'd to a puff.
A budget of Mathematical books for my study at ELBA
Materials for the history of my life and exploits
Pub.d by J Phillips N 32 Charles Street Hampstead road London May

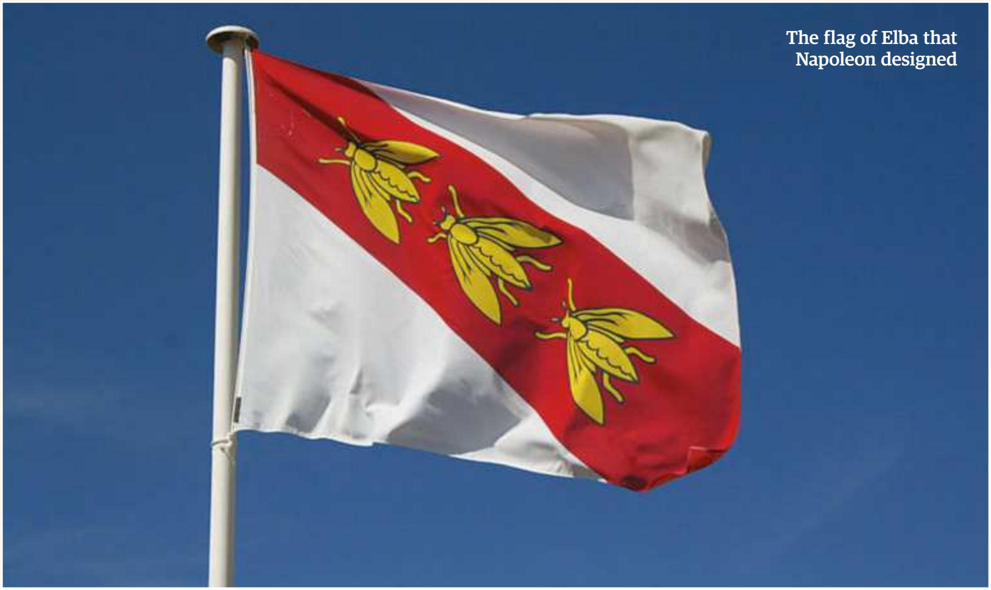
The scathing cartoons that had helped to mobilise Britain against Napoleon did not stop with his exile to Elba

A later painting of Napoleon in exile on Elba by Leo von Klenze



FLAGGING IT

Once Napoleon arrived on Elba, he concerned himself with the minutiae of running the island, but he had already settled one outstanding item while sailing to the island: its flag. As Emperor of Elba, his new realm required a new flag and Napoleon designed it on the Undaunted. Ever the reader, he'd taken books on Elba with him, as well as a book showing the flags of Grand Duchy Tuscany, ancient and modern (Elba had been part of the Duchy before being given to France in 1802). The diagonal stripe echoed the flag of the House of Appiano, ancient rulers of Elba, while the bees represented Napoleon's claimed connection to the Merovingian kings of France, as golden bees were found on the tomb of Childeric I, the founder of the first French royal family, and bees often appear as symbols of Napoleon and his rule. While there's still disagreement about the exact meaning and derivation of the flag, the fact that Napoleon designed it himself is certain - and emblematic of his approach to ruling, whether it be an empire or Elba.


The flag of Elba that Napoleon designed

> "RUMOURS OF ASSASSINATION THREATS MADE THEIR WAY BACK TO NAPOLEON THROUGH HIS INTELLIGENCE CHANNELS, LEAVING THE EMPEROR SO UNSETTLED THAT HE TOOK TO SLEEPING IN A DIFFERENT ROOM OF HIS PALACE EVERY NIGHT"

and servants, as well as 566 soldiers to act as his bodyguards. Nor was court ceremony and excess curtailed, but rather Napoleon imposed an etiquette on what he had renamed the Palais Impérial des Mulini that resembled as closely as possible the protocols of the Tuileries Palace. Napoleon's major Elban expenses were his household and military - the administrative costs for running the household costing only ten per cent less than the military - and his income, from local taxes, excise duties, fisheries and salt mines, did not come close to matching his extravagant expenditures.

Napoleon had brought 500,000 francs with him on his journey into exile, to which nearly another three and a half million were added. But his annual expenditure was between 1.5 and 1.8 million francs, while tax income was half that. The annual grant of two million francs from France would have bridged the financial gap, but Louis XVIII had no desire to send over a payment that he had had no part in negotiating, even if the finances of France would have allowed it. But Napoleon's wars had drained the country's financial resources; it seemed a bit much to deny others in order to subsidise the fallen emperor. Napoleon attempted to increase his income, sending troops to the town of Capoliveri when the inhabitants refused to pay their taxes, but there simply wasn't enough money in Elba to support Napoleon. Without the stipend from Louis XVIII, Napoleon would run out of money in just over two years unless he started making some drastic cuts in his imperial style. A man with five valets could probably have reduced his expenses without too much difficulty, but that was not Napoleon's style. A reduction in his household would have reduced his imperial grandeur and for Napoleon, a man without the birth right to rule claimed by the other European rulers, the trappings of power were a necessity to reinforce the legitimacy of his place in the world - or rather at the top of it.

Napoleon's coat of arms embossed on the wall of the Villa dei Mulini

The front view of what Napoleon decreed was the Palais Impérial des Mulini

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Financial worries were, however, not the main issue in Napoleon's decision to leave Elba. The Congress of Vienna had convened in November 1814 to decide the future shape of Europe and it soon became clear that the European powers were not prepared to leave Napoleon on Elba. Although officially cut off from communications with France and Europe, Napoleon had opened clandestine channels to bring him intelligence of the situation within France and of political developments, while the high-ranking tourists who flocked to see him on Elba were politely but thoroughly probed for the latest news. At the congress, the French foreign minister, Talleyrand, argued that Napoleon should be removed safely out of the way to one of the Azores, 1,400 kilometres from Europe, while other suggestions included St Lucia in the Caribbean and St Helena in the middle of the Atlantic.

Looking east past Napoleon's villa to east Elba. On a clear day, Italy is visible

Nor was it entirely clear that Napoleon would survive long enough to be moved to another, more distant, place of exile. Rumours of assassination threats made their way through his intelligence channels, leaving the emperor so unsettled that he took to sleeping in a different room of his palace every night and, by the end of 1814, he only left the palace in the company of armed guards.

Meanwhile, news was filtering through to Elba that the restored Bourbon monarchy was not proving popular with the French people. While there was an element of Napoleon seeking the information he wanted to hear – that the French still loved him and would welcome him back – it was clear that Louis' restored regime was alienating some of the elements of French society that had supported Napoleon through his years in power. In particular, much of Napoleon's huge military was made redundant, and the rest put on half wages. This was a powerful constituency to alienate, particularly when ordinary soldiers generally remained loyal to the emperor, notwithstanding the way Napoleon spent their blood for his glory. The replacing of the tricolore with the white Bourbon flag antagonised Republicans, while the attempts of returning exiles to reclaim lands and possessions without recompense stoked fears of a return to the worst excesses of the ancien régime. With the Bourbons having squandered much of the political capital that came with their restoration, Napoleon could easily convince himself that what he wanted, conditions conducive to his return to power, had come about.

What's more, by the end of December 1814, Napoleon had become so concerned about his future that he met the British representative on Elba, Colonel Sir Neil Campbell, to tell him that he would resist by force any attempt to remove him from the island. The Congress of Vienna lasted from November 1814 to June 1815, but the diplomats shaping the new Europe should perhaps have given thought to the primary impulse of the man they had left languishing on Elba: for Napoleon, always, the best form of defence was to attack.

Quite when Napoleon decided to return to France and make a renewed bid for the throne is unknown, for the decision lay in his innermost heart, which he kept apart from the public face he showed his companions. It's likely the hope of return had gone with him into exile, but by the first months of 1815, he had made the decision. When Campbell left for Italy on 16 February (to visit his doctor or his mistress, or both), the coast was clear – literally so, since Campbell had sailed aboard his ship, the HMS Partridge, that had been detailed to keep a discreet watch on the island. The same day, Napoleon ordered that his brig, Inconstant, be made ready with supplies and painted to resemble a British ship. The camouflage proved prescient, for a week later, the Partridge returned, anchoring in Portoferraio harbour on the evening of 23 February. Campbell was still in Italy, but he had dispatched his boat back to Elba to check all was well, and the eagle still in his eyrie. On seeing the approach of the Partridge, Napoleon ordered the Inconstant out to sea, and set his soldiers to work gardening around his villa so that everything would appear as normal. On 24 February the captain of the Partridge brought some tourists ashore, checked that Napoleon was still in residence and, satisfied, weighed anchor and set sail again. For a naval man, he seems to have been singularly unobservant.

The next day, Napoleon met the island's officials and told them he was leaving. The departure was set for the evening of Sunday 26 February. Napoleon left the Palais Impérial des Mulini at 7pm and crowds accompanied his carriage down to the harbour. Followed by a press of small vessels, Napoleon was rowed out to the Inconstant and went aboard. Alongside the brig were six other vessels. The small flotilla was carrying about 1,000 men, 40 horses and four cannons. With such an army Napoleon was going to try to win back France.

Standing on the bridge of the Inconstant, Napoleon looked over the sea towards France. "The die is cast," he said. The emperor was about to make his last, desperate bid for power. Amid quiet winds, the convoy made slow progress but as the sun rose on 1 March 1815, Napoleon saw, coming over the horizon, what he had longed to see during his exile: France.

“NAPOLEON BUILT AN EMPIRE THAT COVERED VAST SWATHES OF THE CONTINENT”

Charles J Esdaile is a professor in history at the University of Liverpool. He is the author of numerous books on the Napoleonic Wars including *Napoleon, France and Waterloo: The Eagle Rejected* and *Napoleon's Wars: An International History, 1803-1815*.

NAPOLEON'S LAST STAND

How one reckless gamble ended the emperor's career

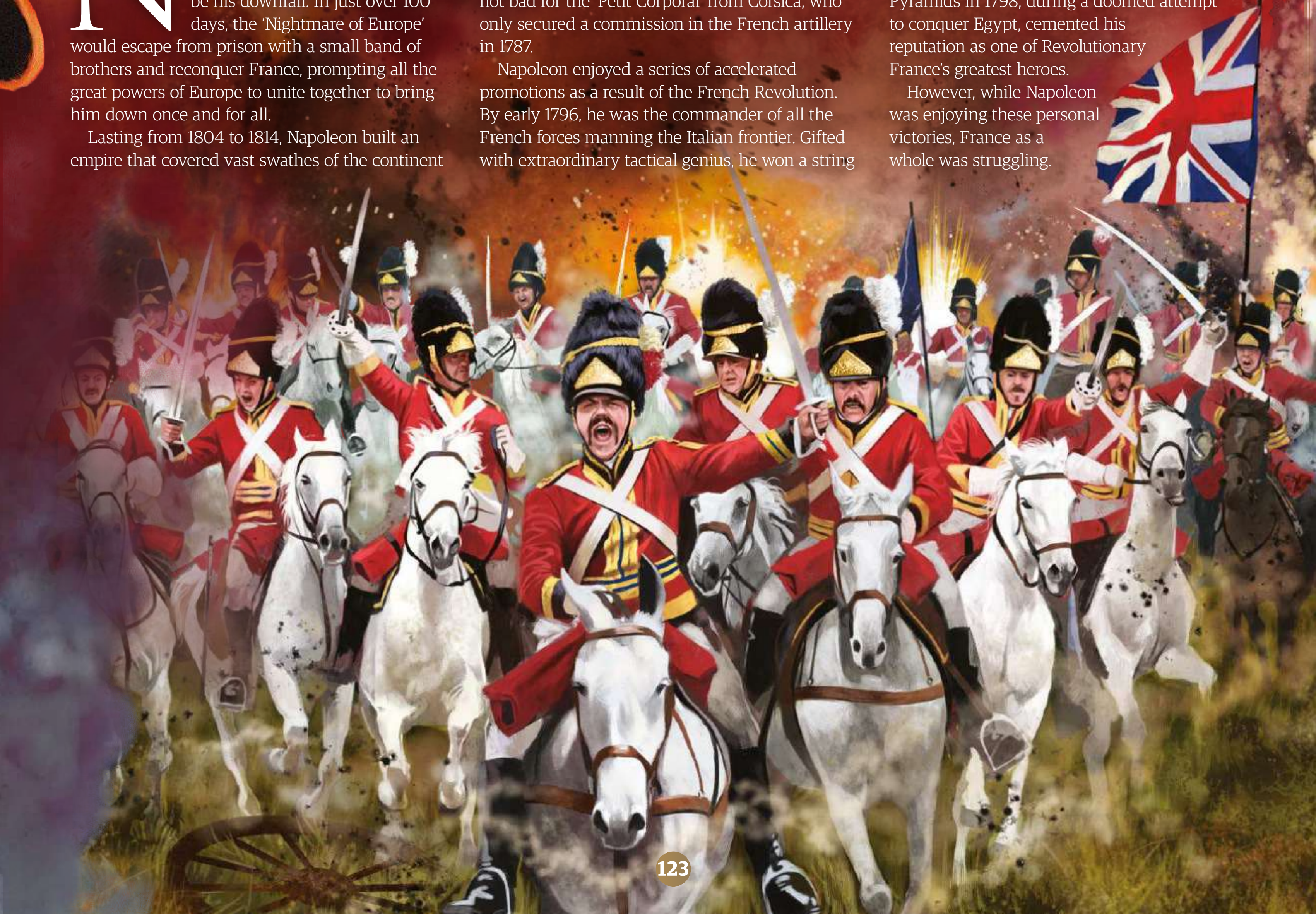
Words **Charles J Esdaile**

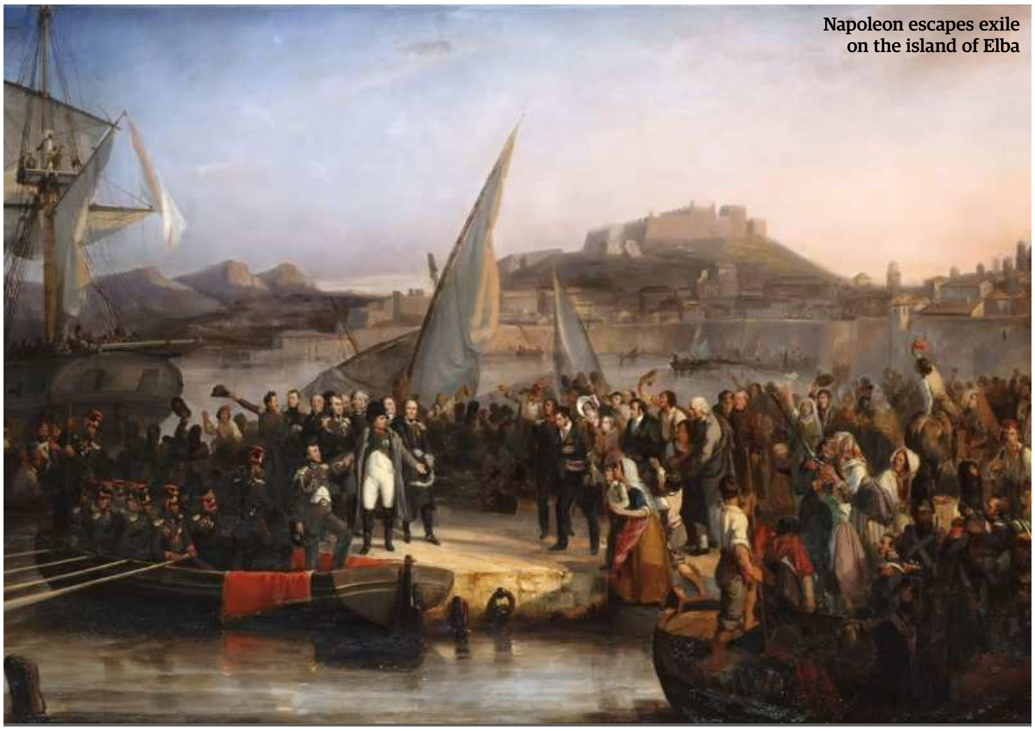
Napoleon Bonaparte was a man whose vaulting ambition saw him conquer Europe - but it would also be his downfall. In just over 100 days, the 'Nightmare of Europe' would escape from prison with a small band of brothers and reconquer France, prompting all the great powers of Europe to unite together to bring him down once and for all.

Lasting from 1804 to 1814, Napoleon built an empire that covered vast swathes of the continent and by 1810 it was easier to list the regions he didn't dominate - Portugal, Sicily, Sardinia, and the British, Russian and Ottoman Empires. This was not bad for the 'Petit Corporal' from Corsica, who only secured a commission in the French artillery in 1787.

Napoleon enjoyed a series of accelerated promotions as a result of the French Revolution. By early 1796, he was the commander of all the French forces manning the Italian frontier. Gifted with extraordinary tactical genius, he won a string of great victories that knocked both Austria and Piedmont out of the War of the First Coalition. Similar success in Cairo fighting the Battle of the Pyramids in 1798, during a doomed attempt to conquer Egypt, cemented his reputation as one of Revolutionary France's greatest heroes.

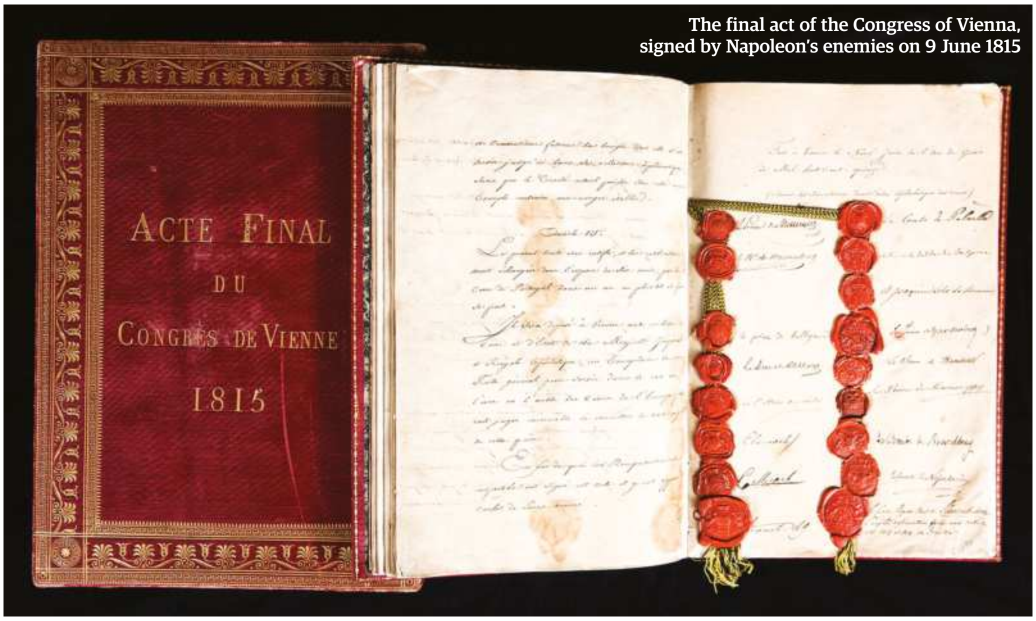
However, while Napoleon was enjoying these personal victories, France as a whole was struggling.





Napoleon escapes exile on the island of Elba

> “WITH HIS BACK TO THE WALL, NAPOLEON FOUGHT BRAVELY BUT THE ODDS AGAINST HIM WERE JUST TOO HIGH”



The final act of the Congress of Vienna, signed by Napoleon’s enemies on 9 June 1815

While he was off gallivanting in Egypt, Austria and Russia had rejoined the War of the Second Coalition and had retaken Italy. It was clear that France needed a much stronger government than the one that had emerged from the bloody chaos of the Revolution.

Seeking to fill the void, Napoleon, an extremely determined young man who had been dreaming of taking power for some time, set himself up as a de facto dictator in November 1799. Over the next year, he remodelled France and forced all of its opponents to make peace. Though hostilities with Britain would resume in 1803, the next year he was rewarded by the tame political system he had created with the title of Emperor of the French.

Over the next few years, the French armies secured unprecedented success and the result was that France remained complicit. With their social position both respected and protected by the state, the propertied classes had no reason to oppose Napoleon, while the populace as a whole were mollified by a measure of economic prosperity. Additionally, though levels of conscription were still relatively heavy, they were not unreasonable. By 1807, the French Empire was greatly expanded. This included areas annexed to France and ruled directly from Paris, and satellite states that were often ruled by one of the emperor’s many relatives, such as Spain under his brother Joseph.

However, victory turned Napoleon’s head and he increasingly began to overreach himself. As his desire for power and glory increased, so did his demands for men and money. Meanwhile, all the powers of Europe were driven into a position in which they had no option but to fight him. The wars dragged on interminably with little sign of any sort of lasting peace. The elites and populace alike became increasingly unhappy with their emperor - and all the more so when a series of mistakes on the part of Napoleon precipitated a general economic crisis, which had terrible effects on living standards for ordinary people.

Beaten first in Russia in 1812 and then in Germany in 1813, the French were facing invasion by 1814. With his back to the wall, Napoleon fought bravely but the odds against him were just too high, while the system of conscription broke down in the face of a wholesale refusal to obey the regime or to implement its policies. Within weeks, it was all over. Napoleon was finally forced to surrender to his enemies on 6 April 1814.

In theory, this should have been the end of the story. Napoleon was exiled to the tiny

HIGHLIGHTS OF NAPOLEON’S RETURN TO POWER

DAY 1

20 MARCH 1815

THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

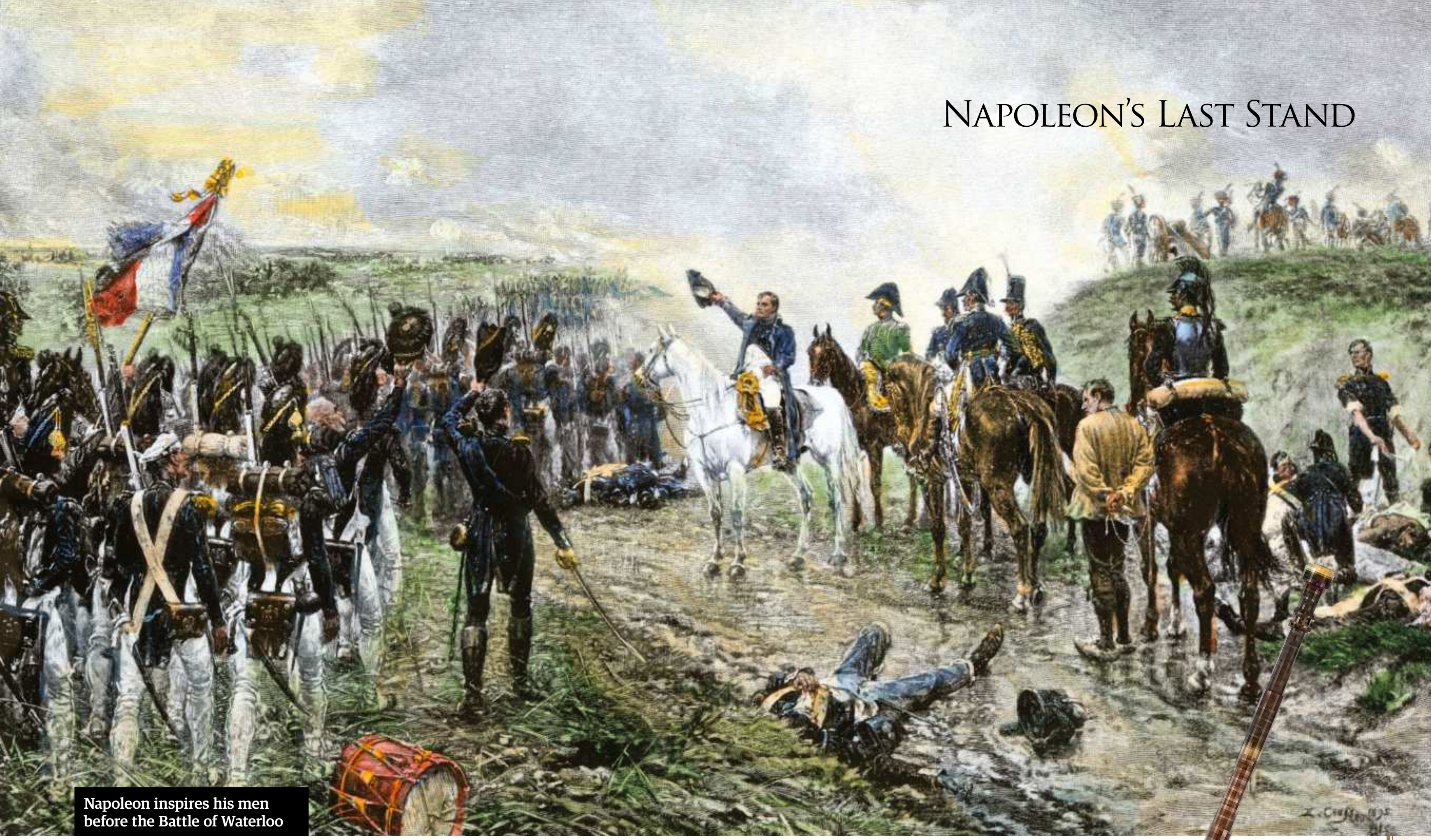
As Napoleon returns to Paris, Louis XVIII flees to Lille. While Napoleon is greeted at the Tuileries Palace by a large crowd of officers, the streets are semi-deserted.

DAY 6

25 MARCH 1815

EUROPE GOES TO WAR

The Congress of Vienna unanimously brands Napoleon an outlaw, with Russia, Prussia, Austria and Britain committing to defeat him for good.



Napoleon inspires his men before the Battle of Waterloo

Mediterranean island of Elba and given a position as its king, and the Bourbon monarchy was restored to France in the person of Louis XVIII. Meanwhile, the powers of Europe met in a great congress at Vienna in which they attempted not to turn the clock back to 1789, but to build a new system of international relations instead. On the one hand, it would ensure that France couldn't embark on any more acts of aggression and, on the other, it would make sure that Europe didn't slide back into the endless dynastic conflicts that had plagued the 18th century.

Watching from afar, the fallen Napoleon was not treated especially harshly in the wake of his defeat. With him went roughly 600 soldiers drawn from the Imperial Guard, and he was given complete freedom of movement as he was left almost entirely unsupervised on the peaceful and picturesque Italian island.

For Napoleon, however, confinement to so small a sphere was torture. The French government also afforded him a legitimate grievance by failing to pay the pension that had been granted to him. Many stories reached him of massive public discontent with the new regime so at the end of February 1815, he decided to return to France and restore himself to glory.

His prison break was somewhat anticlimactic as there was not a single guard to stop him. Though there was normally a British agent – Sir Neil Campbell – assigned to watch over Napoleon, he had left Elba to travel to Florence on 16 February, allegedly to visit his mistress. Ten days later, Napoleon set sail on board a small brig called L'Inconstant along with his imperial guard.

There followed the so-called 'flight of the eagle'. According to legend, the erstwhile emperor returned to a hero's welcome in France but the truth may actually have been a little less romantic. When he landed on the French coast on 1 March, he was initially denied entrance to the town of Antibes and could supposedly only find two people to volunteer for his cause.

However, in a somewhat famous episode where Napoleon dared a unit blocking the road to fire upon him, the garrison of Grenoble actually decided to join him on 5 March. The city of Lyons – a place that the emperor had always favoured when in power – also welcomed his arrival with great excitement just five days later.

A set of bagpipes used by the Cameron Highlanders Regiment that fought at Waterloo

"CONFINEMENT TO SO SMALL A SPHERE WAS TORTURE"

© The Highlander's Museum; Photography Relic Imaging Ltd

DAY 10 29 MARCH 1815

THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

In an effort to appear revolutionary, Napoleon appoints the Jacobin radical Lazare Carnot as his minister of the interior and decrees the abolition of slavery.

DAY 12 31 MARCH 1815

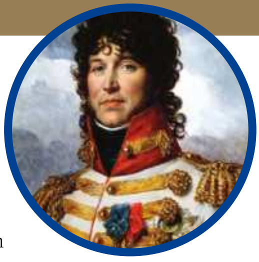
LOUIS IN EXILE

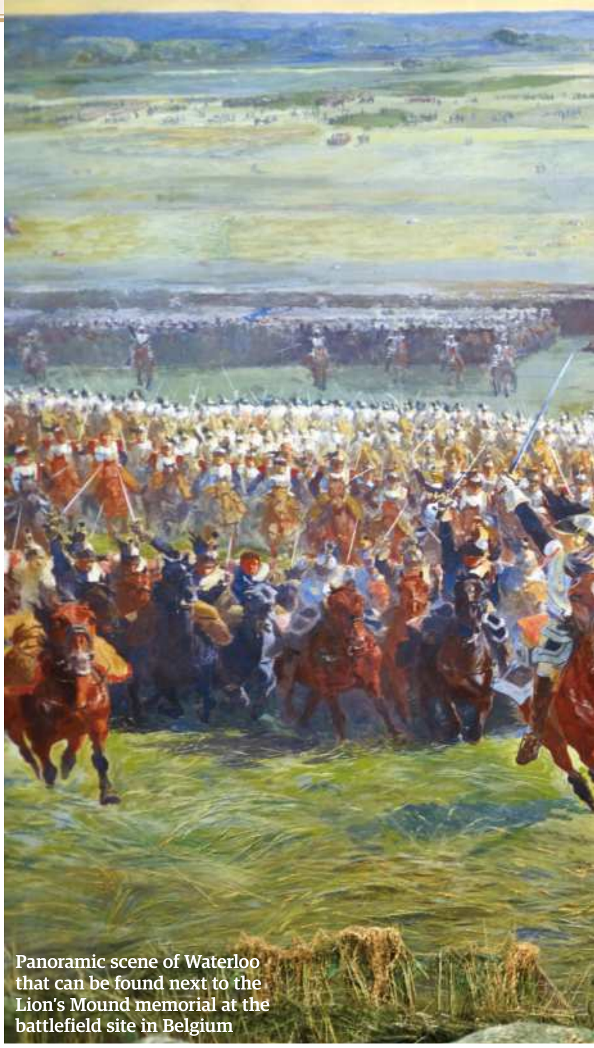
Finding the garrison in Lille hostile to the royal cause, Louis XVIII leaves France with a loyal band of followers and creates a court while in exile in Ghent, Belgium.

DAY 63 20 MAY 1815

MURAT'S FAILED POWER GRAB

Joachim Murat, king of Naples and Napoleon's brother-in-law, declares war on Austria but is defeated, prompting him to flee to Corsica.





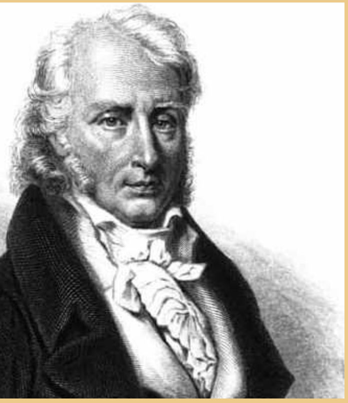
Panoramic scene of Waterloo that can be found next to the Lion's Mound memorial at the battlefield site in Belgium

VIVE LA CONSTITUTION!

In early 1814, as the empire was crumbling, French political writer Benjamin Constant published a scathing attack on Napoleon, painting him as a tyrant obsessed with conquest. A year later, however, Constant could not resist the returned emperor's invitation to draw up a new French constitution. Napoleon knew that to rally support after returning from Elba, he needed to embrace France's revolutionary heritage and pose as the defender of liberty against the Bourbons.

Constant's document, although described as a simple 'addition' to the earlier imperial French constitutions, was more like a suggestion for a liberal constitutional monarchy. Called the Acte Additionel, it gave real power to the House of Representatives, which was elected by the 'electoral colleges' of the empire and allowed for the extension of franchise to a greater number of people. It also explicitly guaranteed both press and religious freedom, as well as ruling out any reversal of revolutionary land reform.

Napoleon signed the Acte Additionnel on 22 April 1815 and submitted the constitution, quickly nicknamed 'La Benjamine' after its author, to a plebiscite. Scarcely 20 per cent of those eligible actually voted but it still received 1.3 million 'yes' votes versus 5,000 negative votes, so the government hailed its approval on 1 June. The re-restored Louis XVIII abolished it after the Battle of Waterloo but it went on to serve as an inspiration for later French constitutions, especially that of 1830.



Benjamin Constant was hopeful he could build a liberal Europe

"NAPOLEON CLAIMED TO BE A CHAMPION OF THE REVOLUTION AGAINST REACTION AND HE PROPOSED A NEW LIBERAL CONSTITUTION"

Most astonishingly of all, despite having promised Louis XVIII to bring Napoleon back to Paris in an iron cage, Marshal Ney pledged his allegiance to Napoleon along with his 6,000 men when they finally met at Auxerre on 18 March. Taken against his better judgement, it was a decision that was to eventually cost Ney his life.

Having received reports of Napoleon's growing support, Louis XVIII fled Paris on 20 March. Napoleon arrived just a few hours later, taking up residence at the Tuileries Palace. After being greeted by a large crowd of officers, they all celebrated well into the night.

Napoleon's ability to win over the army was to be expected. Some of the soldiers had been driven to fury by the restored monarchy's treatment of the military. Many officers who had once fought bravely for Napoleon had been placed on half-pay by the Bourbons in favour of aristocrats who had fled abroad in the wake of the Revolution - and they had fought for France's enemies to boot. However, regaining power over everyone else would prove to be trickier.

Popular responses to Napoleon's grandiose return were muted. While some areas that had done well out of Napoleon felt a measure of enthusiasm as they had particular reason to resent the Bourbons or had suffered the full brunt of the invasions of 1814, news of his return elsewhere was greeted with a mixture of fear, horror and armed resistance.

In an attempt to win over public opinion, Napoleon claimed to be a champion of the Revolution against reaction and he proposed a new liberal constitution but his every effort fell on deaf ears and was often badly bungled. For example, the so-called ceremony of the Champ de Mai, held on 1 June 1815, was supposed to be a great celebration of the new constitution.

It was bad enough that this was clearly an attempt to restore the institutions of the empire in a more liberal guise. To add insult to injury, the very name 'Champ de Mai' was unfortunate as it originally referred to assemblies of nobles called by Charlemagne and other Medieval monarchs when they wished to pacify subjects who might otherwise have become rebellious.

It's hard to tell what Napoleon thought he could achieve by returning to France. Take power in Paris though he might, there was really no realistic chance of the European powers actually leaving him in peace. They had all made effort after effort to come to terms with him prior to 1814 only to find that his demands were just too outrageous or that their friendships with the emperor brought little or nothing in the way of benefits for them. Napoleon was quickly declared an international outlaw and as a result, preparations were afoot for a massive invasion

DAY 90 15 JUNE 1815

THE EMPEROR STRIKES BACK

Napoleon goes on the offensive with roughly 200,000 men. He plans to drive a wedge between the British and Prussians to defeat them separately.

DAY 91 16 JUNE 1815

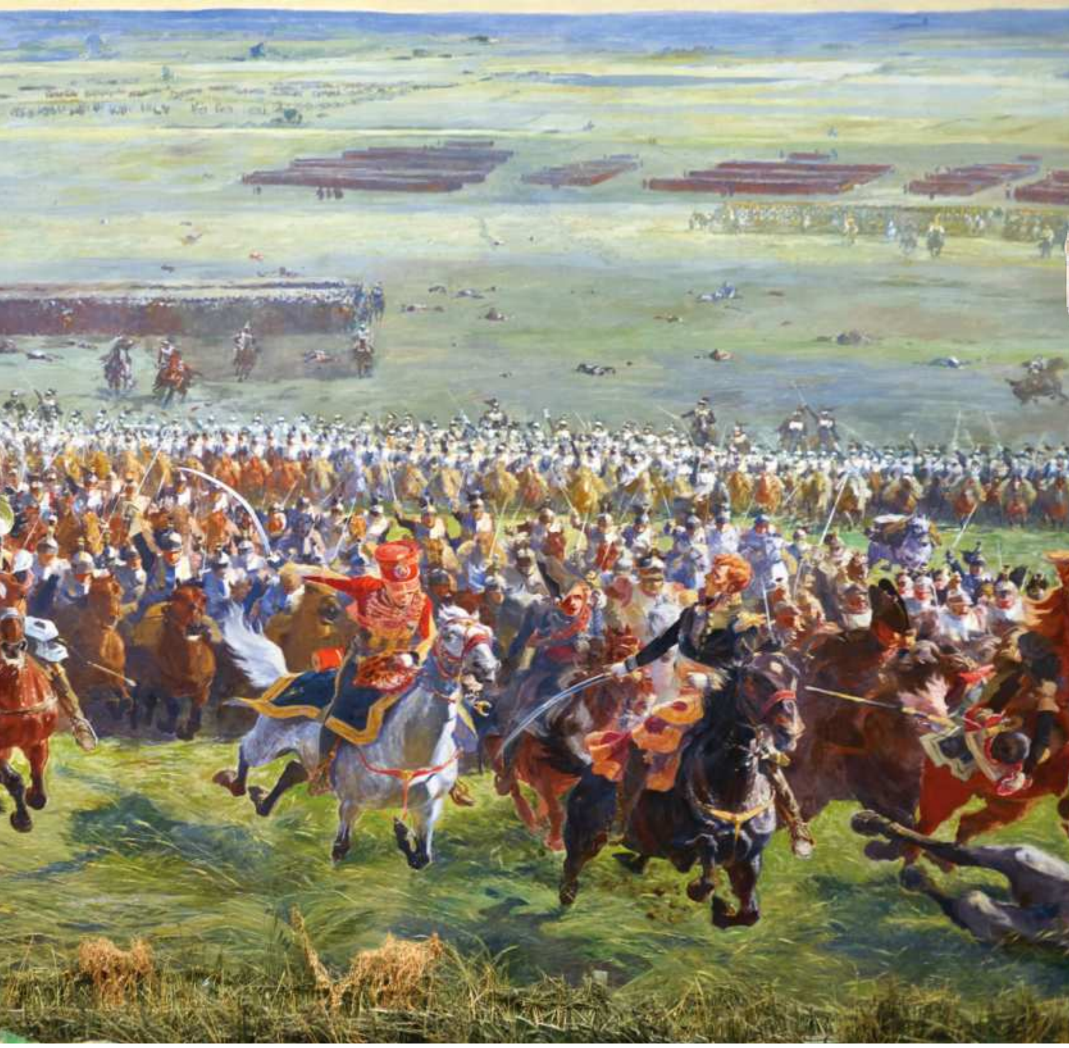
BLÜCHER TAKES A BEATING

Napoleon defeats, but does not destroy, Prussian field marshal Blücher at Ligny, allowing him to escape to Wavre where he agrees to support Wellington at Waterloo.

DAY 93 18 JUNE 1815

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

Despite bad weather and facing both Britain and Prussia, Napoleon makes great gains during his last ever battle before ultimately being overwhelmed. Tens of thousands die in the melee.



from
WATERLOO
XXX
REGT

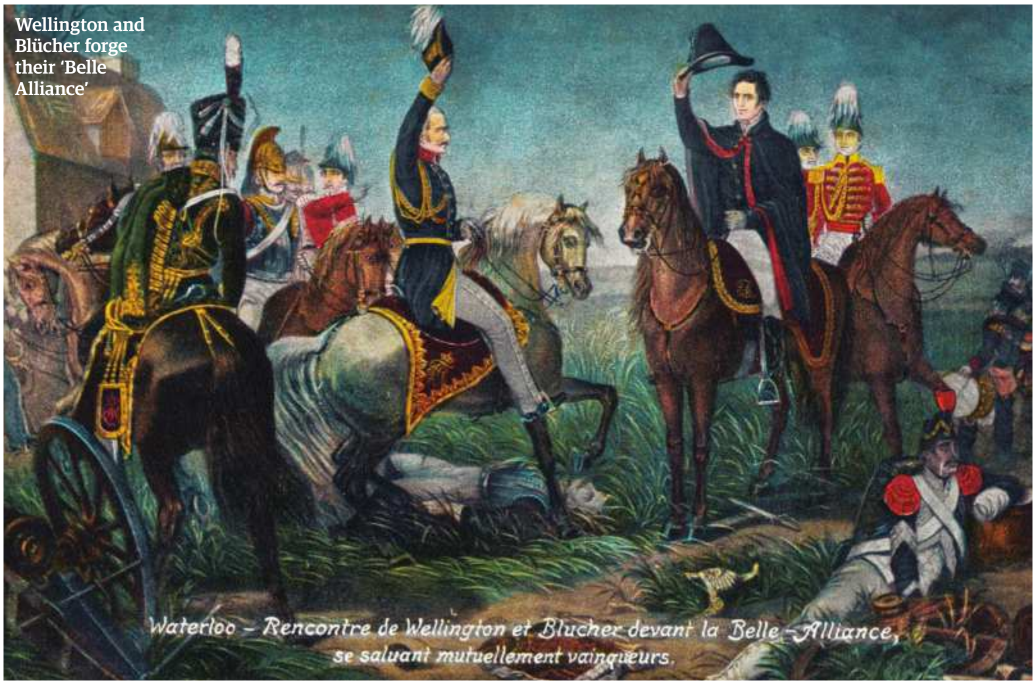
© Lancashire Infantry Museum. Photography Relic Imaging Ltd

A marching drum carried by the French 105th Infantry Regiment

of France within a matter of days. Against such odds, there was little chance of Napoleon achieving victory.

It was quite clear that however unpopular Louis XVIII had been, the French people were in no mood to see the return of a ruler who was associated with both economic disaster and war without end. With conscription out of the question, Napoleon was forced to rely on the services of the much-reduced army that had been in his service when he escaped from Elba.

The only men who were mobilised for military service were the militia, the National Guard and the many thousands of soldiers who had been sent home in 1814 on the understanding that they could be called up once again if they were needed in the event of war. Even so, this should have given the emperor an army of approximately 500,000 men but in the event, fewer than one-third of those who should have put in an appearance seemed to turn up. Thus, Napoleon was left with a force of only half that number.


Wellington and Blücher forge their 'Belle Alliance'
Waterloo – Rencontre de Wellington et Blucher devant la Belle-Alliance,
se saluant mutuellement vainqueurs.

DAY 97 22 JUNE 1815

NAPOLEON ABDICATES AGAIN

After Waterloo, the French political elite call for Napoleon to stand down. The emperor accepts defeat and abdicates in favour of his four-year-old son.

DAY 105 29 JUNE 1815

QUITTING PARIS

Napoleon leaves the capital with a small military escort in an effort to escape Blücher's fast-approaching cavalry, which has been told to capture him dead or alive.

DAY 114 8 JULY 1815

LOUIS XVIII RESTORED

Louis returns to Paris and presides over a constitutional monarchy. Wellington remains in France with the Allied occupation army until 1818.

THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

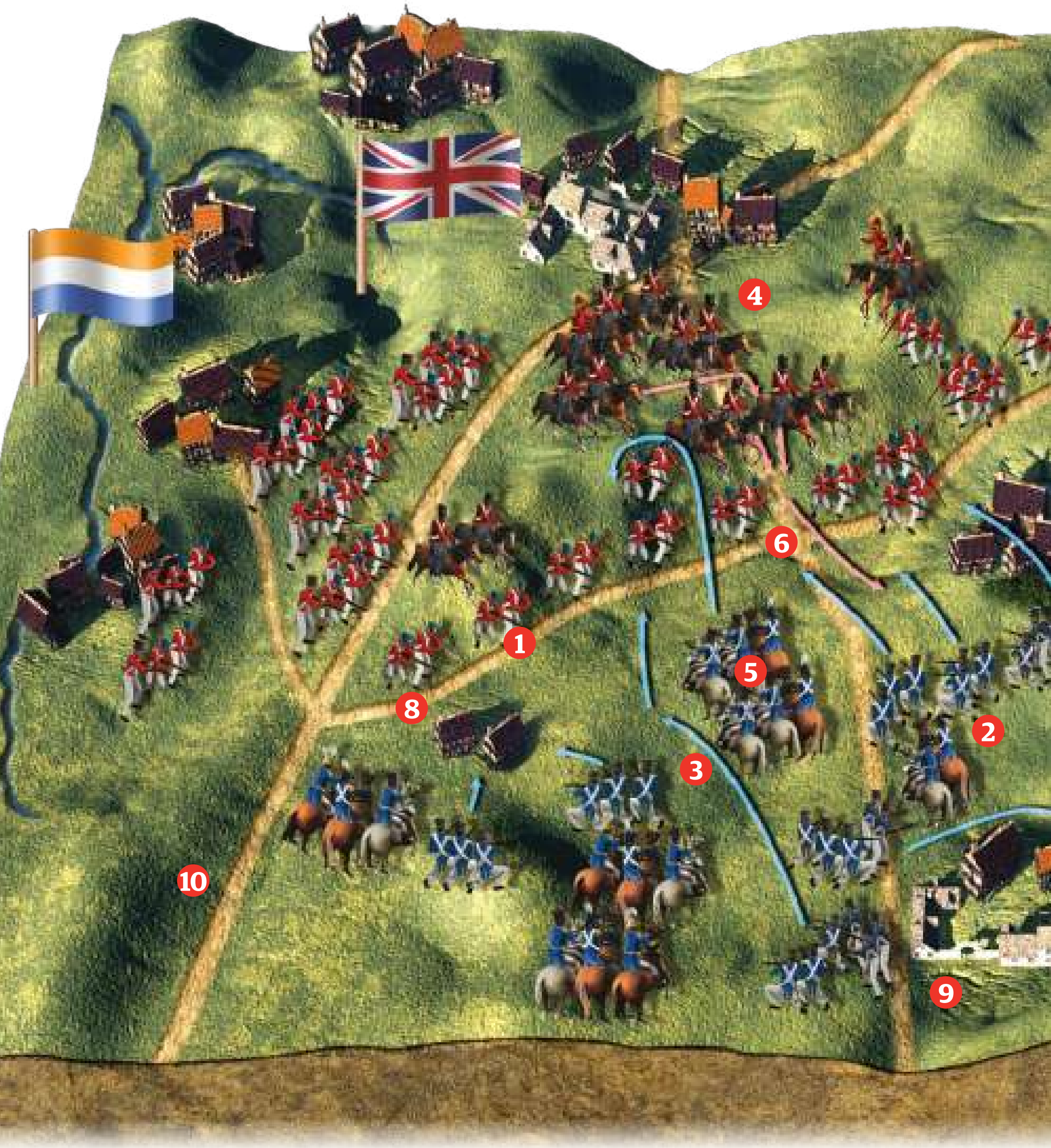
Discover where it all went wrong for Napoleon at Waterloo

01 FIRST FORAY

Between 10am and 11.30am on 18 June, the Battle of Waterloo began with a French attack on a Coalition position at Hougoumont, a large farmhouse that served as a tactical outpost. This fighting was low-key at first with few troops from each side engaged but by the early afternoon, it had become a bloody epicentre for much of the fighting with the Coalition forces holding out against numerous French assaults.

02 GRANDE BATTERIE

At around midday, Napoleon ordered his grande batterie of 80 cannons to open fire upon Wellington's position. The cannons caused many casualties in Wellington's cavalry, opening a potential weak point in the defending lines.



03 FRENCH INFANTRY ATTACK

After the Coalition's lines had been weakened, Napoleon began his attack proper with numerous infantry corps advancing. The initial fighting went the way of the French with the left's infantry pressing Wellington's forces back. However, just when it looked like Napoleon would make a decisive break, he was informed that Prussian troops were fast approaching. He tried to send word to Marshal Grouchy to engage with them but his commander was in Wavre.

04 BRITISH HEAVY CAVALRY ATTACK

Seeing their infantry was about to buckle, Wellington's First and Second Brigades of heavy cavalry charged and smashed into the French infantry. By the time they reached the bottom of the hill, they had completely halted the infantry's advance. In doing so, however, they had left themselves exposed and without back-up.

05 NAPOLEON COUNTERS

With the Coalition's heavy cavalry now facing squares of French infantry to the front and with no support, Napoleon ordered a counterattack, dispatching his cuirassier and lancer regiments from his own cavalry division. A massive central battle ensued, with cavalry, infantry and artillery all involved. While Napoleon's cavalry regiments took out much of the Coalition's heavy cavalry, they could not wipe them out. Napoleon also dispatched troops to intercept the Prussians.

10 FRENCH ARMY RETREATS

With the French left, right and centre now disintegrating, the only cohesive forces left available to Napoleon were two battalions of his Old Guard. Despite hoping to rally his remaining troops behind them, the strength of the Coalition's army left this untenable and all Napoleon could do was order a retreat. His exit was covered by the Old Guard, many of whom died holding back the Coalition's advance.

09 PLANCENOIT RECAPTURED

The Prussian army retook Plancenoit and targeted Napoleon's right flank, giving Wellington the upper hand. The Old Guard that had been supporting the French position at Plancenoit beat a hasty retreat.

08 IMPERIAL GUARD ATTACKS WELLINGTON

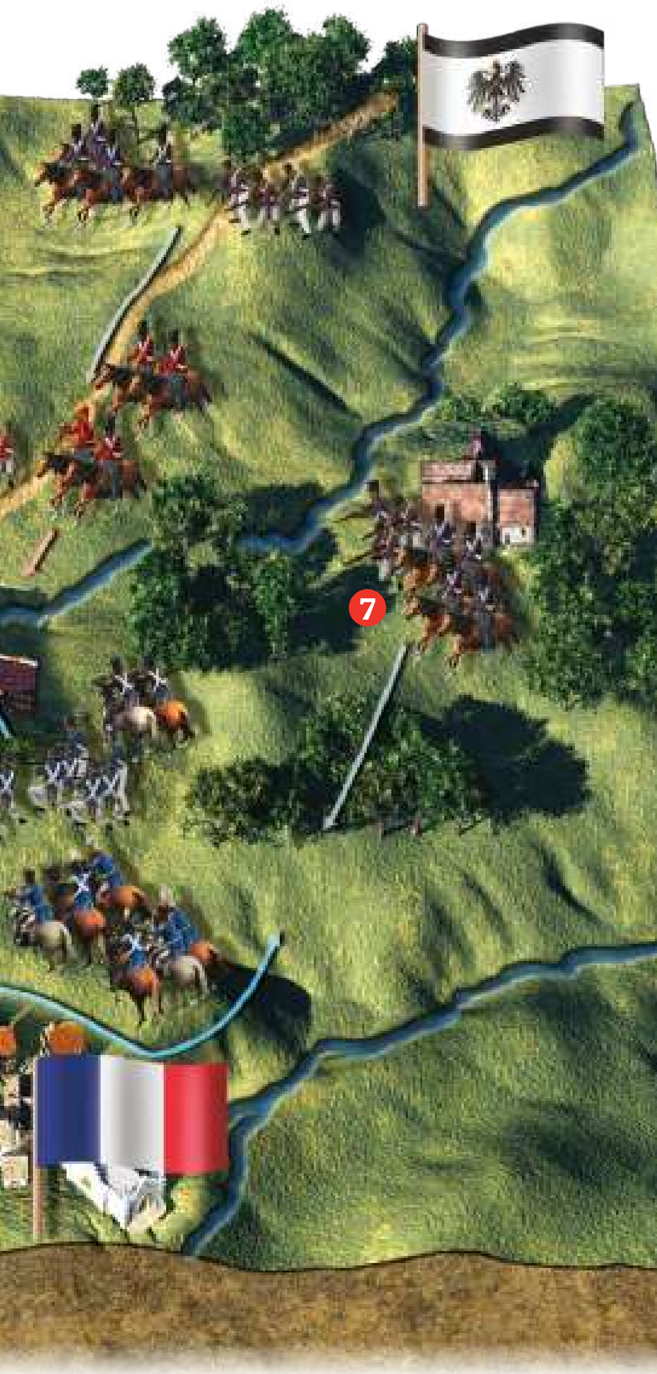
With his forces temporarily holding off the Prussians at Plancenoit, Napoleon went on one last major offensive. He sent the supposedly undefeatable Imperial Guard into Wellington's army's centre in an attempt to break through and attack his flanks from within. While the guard had some success breaching multiple lines of the Coalition force, it was eventually overrun by Wellington's numerically superior infantry and wiped out.

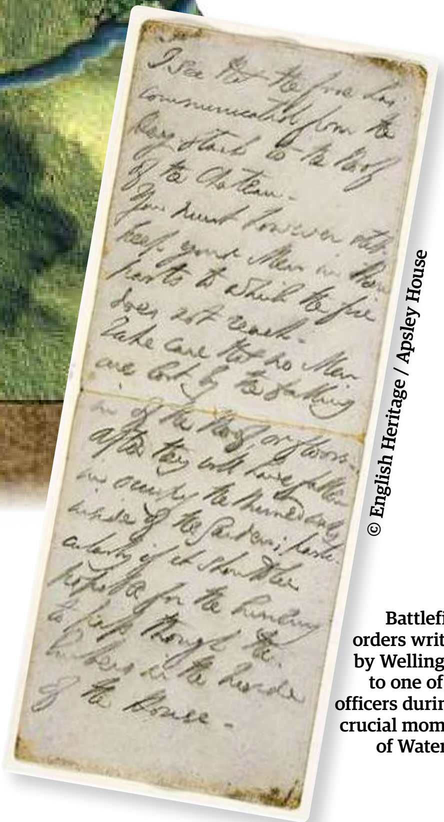
07 PRUSSIANS ARRIVE

Wellington had been exchanging communications with General Blücher, commander of the Prussian army, since 10am and knew he was approaching from the east. The Prussians arrived at roughly 4.30pm and, noting the village of Plancenoit on Napoleon's right flank was a tactically important position, began to attack the French forces there. However, after initially taking the village, French forces reclaimed it.

06 STALEMATE

At the heart of the battle, Coalition and French squares then undertook a series of back-and-forth exchanges. All the while cannon and musket fire continued to rain down from all sides and, aside from one more combined arms assault by the French on the centre-right of Wellington's lines, a general melee ensued. Each side saw their numbers steadily chipped away.





I see that the fire has
communicated from the
Hay Stack to the Roof
of the Chateau.
You must however still
keep your Men in those
parts to which the fire
does not reach.
Take care that no Men
are lost by the falling
in of the Roof, or floors.
After they will have fallen
in occupy the Ruined walls
inside of the Garden; partic-
ularly if it should be
possible for the Enemy
to pass through the
Embers in the Inside
of the House.

© English Heritage / Apsley House

Battlefield orders written by Wellington to one of his officers during a crucial moment of Waterloo

BATTLE BY NUMBERS

NAPOLEON 45
DUKE OF WELLINGTON 46
BLÜCHER 72
YEARS OLD

WATERLOO
15 kilometres from Brussels

ARMY STATS France		Seventh Coalition	
TROOPS	72,000	TROOPS	113,000
CAVALRY	14,000	CAVALRY	11,000
CANNONS	252	CANNONS	156

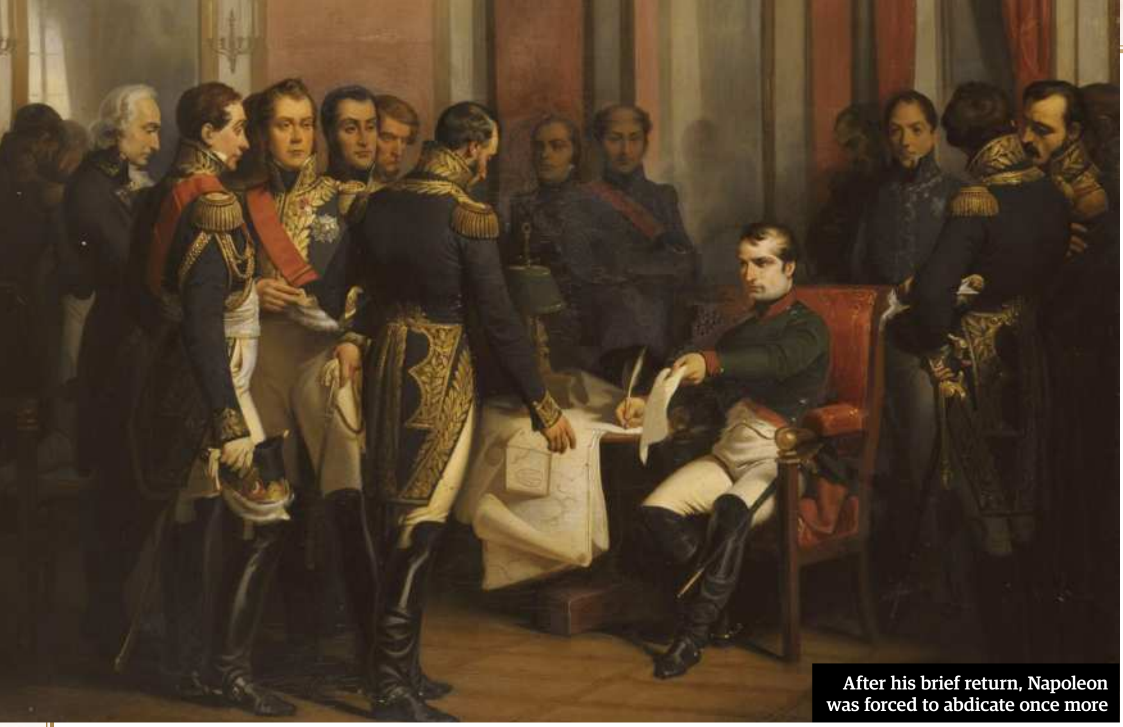
11 HOURS
Length of battle

90 CASUALTIES PER MINUTE ON AVERAGE

Emergency amputations (without anaesthetic) 2,000

French losses
25,000 DEAD AND WOUNDED
8,000 PRISONERS

Coalition losses
23,000 DEAD AND WOUNDED


After his brief return, Napoleon was forced to abdicate once more

“A MAN WHOSE AMBITION AND LUST FOR GLORY HAD MADE THE ENTIRE CONTINENT RUN WITH BLOOD”

In this situation, his only option was to strike a rapid blow against the nearest enemy in the hope that a great victory would be obtained that would frighten his foes into making peace. In truth, this was a slim hope. On 15 June 1815, he invaded Belgium with the idea of catching the forces there unawares, as these troops were the most vulnerable to attack.

In the firing line were two separate armies, namely the duke of Wellington’s Army of the Netherlands - a polyglot collection of troops from Britain, Holland and various minor German states - and Gebhard von Blücher’s Prussian Army of the Lower Rhine. Neither force was of particularly good quality and individually they were both smaller than Napoleon’s 125,000-strong Army of the North. In consequence, the emperor planned to defeat them separately by getting between them and hitting each one before they could unite and overwhelm him by the sheer weight of their combined numbers.

As an operational plan this was very good but it was badly executed. Units took wrong turns, failed to move at the appointed time or became jammed in the narrow country lanes leading to the frontier. Fortunately for the French, the situation was not at its best in the Allied camp either. For ease of subsisting the troops, the armies of Wellington and Blücher were spread over a wide expanse of southern Belgium and the two commanders were not expecting an attack so soon. That night, Wellington was at a ball hosted by the duchess of Richmond where he and many other key officers enjoyed the free-flowing wine.

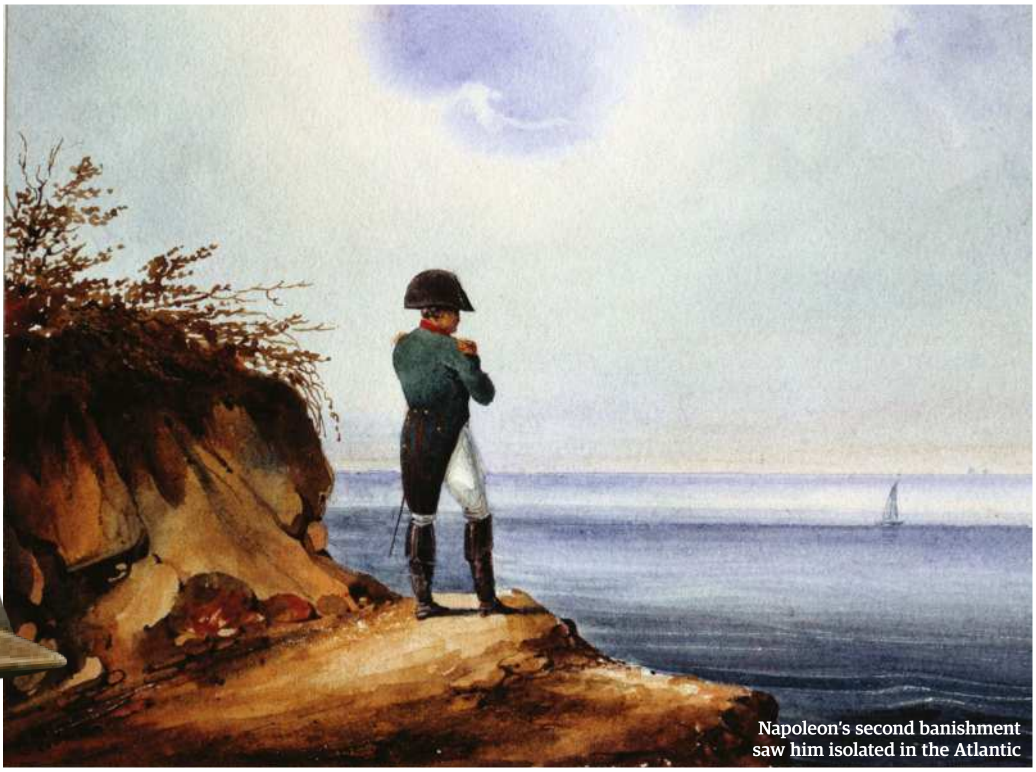
Hampered by poor staff-work, however, the French could not take advantage of their opponents’ disarray. Initial success against the Prussians in particular was squandered, and Wellington and Blücher managed to reach safety a few kilometres south of Brussels - close enough to support one another with ease. Napoleon’s master plan had failed.

The climax of the campaign came on the morning of Sunday 18 June. Having followed Wellington with the bulk of his forces, Napoleon needed to crush him before the Prussians arrived to help him but heavy rainfall the day before meant that much of his army had not yet arrived. It was nearly midday before his forces finally got into action and even when they did, they found that Wellington had chosen a very strong position in the form of a long ridge studded with a number of stoutly built farms. Every attempt at attack was soundly defeated.

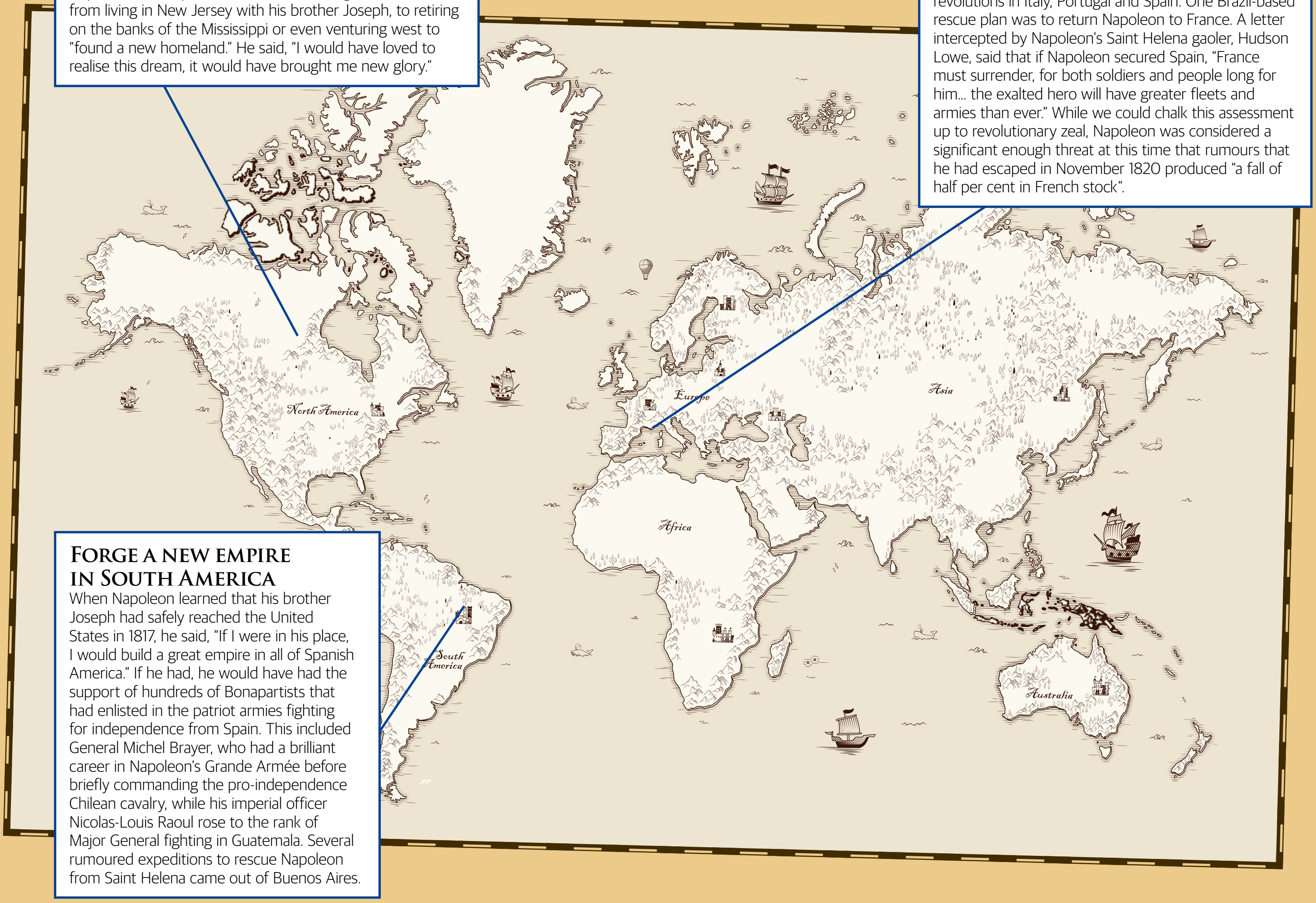
All this time, exactly as he had promised, Blücher’s army had been marching to the sound of the guns and at around 4.30pm, large numbers of Prussian soldiers started pouring onto the field on the emperor’s right flank. From then on, increasing numbers of French troops had to be diverted to hold off Blücher. Success against Wellington became even harder to attain. One last attack by the Imperial Guard having been beaten off, the onset of evening saw the Prussian pressure simply become too great. The defensive line that had been established to hold them back was not just breached, but swept away.

This was the end - within a matter of minutes, the whole French army had collapsed. The only troops who put up any sort of fight were a few battalions of the Imperial Guard that had

A bicorn hat, said to have belonged to Napoleon


Napoleon’s second banishment saw him isolated in the Atlantic

WHERE ELSE COULD NAPOLEON HAVE FLED?



LIVE IN EXILE IN THE UNITED STATES

Napoleon seriously considered trying to escape to the United States after the Battle of Waterloo. While he ultimately surrendered to a British warship at Rochefort, he also had a vessel waiting for him at the port laden with furniture, books and maps of the US so that he could start a new life in the New World. When he was on Saint Helena, Napoleon often speculated about what might have been, from living in New Jersey with his brother Joseph, to retiring on the banks of the Mississippi or even venturing west to "found a new homeland." He said, "I would have loved to realise this dream, it would have brought me new glory."

JOIN THE REVOLUTIONS IN EUROPE

While Europe was in no mood to welcome back Napoleon in 1815, within five years there were revolutions in Italy, Portugal and Spain. One Brazil-based rescue plan was to return Napoleon to France. A letter intercepted by Napoleon's Saint Helena gaoler, Hudson Lowe, said that if Napoleon secured Spain, "France must surrender, for both soldiers and people long for him… the exalted hero will have greater fleets and armies than ever." While we could chalk this assessment up to revolutionary zeal, Napoleon was considered a significant enough threat at this time that rumours that he had escaped in November 1820 produced "a fall of half per cent in French stock".

FORGE A NEW EMPIRE IN SOUTH AMERICA

When Napoleon learned that his brother Joseph had safely reached the United States in 1817, he said, "If I were in his place, I would build a great empire in all of Spanish America." If he had, he would have had the support of hundreds of Bonapartists that had enlisted in the patriot armies fighting for independence from Spain. This included General Michel Brayer, who had a brilliant career in Napoleon's Grande Armée before briefly commanding the pro-independence Chilean cavalry, while his imperial officer Nicolas-Louis Raoul rose to the rank of Major General fighting in Guatemala. Several rumoured expeditions to rescue Napoleon from Saint Helena came out of Buenos Aires.

remained in reserve. Indeed, such was the disorder that it was only with the greatest difficulty that Napoleon evaded capture at the hands of the vengeful Prussians. He skulked away to begin to contemplate his next move.

Such was the battle of Waterloo. Deposed by the government he had left behind in Paris, Napoleon eventually surrendered to the British on 15 July, who promptly sent him into perpetual exile on the distant island of Saint Helena. He spent the rest of his life blaming Marshal Emmanuel Grouchy, who had blundered on the battlefield, for his defeat at Waterloo. Napoleon refused to realise that Grouchy, who had ended the day fighting the Prussian rearguard at Wavre, could not have reached him in time to make any real difference even had he tried to do so. Behind him, meanwhile, the emperor left a battlefield strewn with tens of thousands of casualties. Even in the two world wars, such a scene of horror was rarely equalled but some might argue that it was a price worth paying for ridding Europe of a man whose ambition and lust for glory had made the entire continent run with blood.

In the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, Napoleon found himself imprisoned in far worse conditions than he had ever endured on Elba – his house, for example, was damp and overrun with rats. Even France suffered much harsher treatment than it had been subjected to in 1814, having both to pay a large indemnity and to endure three years of military occupation.

What's more, Louis XVIII was restored to the throne and was succeeded by his far less politically savvy brother, Charles X, in 1824. Even so, it was not until 1830 that the House of Bourbon was removed from the French throne for good. Perhaps this was proof of just how exaggerated the rumours of popular discontent were, the very same ones that had persuaded Napoleon to embark on his prison break – an adventure that was never far short of crazy.

NAPOLEON IN EXILE

Having escaped from exile once already, could Napoleon have done it again from the unforgiving island of St Helena?

Words **Shannon Selin**

Napoleon Bonaparte spent the last six years of his life as a British prisoner on the remote South Atlantic island of St Helena. Though the island's sheer isolation and forbidding terrain posed daunting challenges to anyone hoping to rescue the former French Emperor, rumours of escape plots abounded. The British government took these seriously and went to enormous lengths to prevent Napoleon's liberation. But did he even want to escape?

Following his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815, Napoleon abdicated the French throne and gave himself up to Britain, hoping that the Prince Regent (future King George IV) would grant him asylum. Instead, Britain – acting on behalf of the European powers allied against Napoleon – transported him to St Helena. A rock 1,900 kilometres west of Africa and 3,200 kilometres east of Brazil seemed an ideal place to stash a public menace, especially one who had escaped from the considerably less remote island of Elba off the coast of Italy a few months earlier.

Jailbreak would not be easy. St Helena is essentially the top of an extinct volcano. There are few accessible landing places among its steep cliffs and the interior is crisscrossed with peaks and ravines. A British surgeon who arrived with one of the regiments to guard Napoleon described the island as "the ugliest and most dismal rock conceivable, of rugged and abrupt surface, rising like an enormous black wart from the face of the deep."

In addition to the natural barriers, there were plenty of man-made ones. St Helena had been in the possession of the East India Company since the mid-17th century. It was already defended as an important port of call for vessels plying the route between Europe and Asia. The landing places were well-fortified and protected by powerful gun batteries. Forts overlooked Jamestown, the island's main settlement and port.

When the ship carrying Napoleon to St Helena dropped anchor off Jamestown in October 1815, "every platform, every aperture, the brow of every hill, was planted with a cannon." Napoleon came on deck and observed through his spyglass the rocky heights bristling with guns. He soon returned to his cabin without comment.

Security was beefed up considerably during Napoleon's captivity. More cannons were added, resulting in some 500 pieces of artillery, manned day and night. Additional regiments were sent from Britain, bringing the garrison to 2,800 troops, an enormous number for an island of only 120 square kilometres and a civilian population of around 6,000. Over 500 men were stationed on Deadwood Plain, in full view of Napoleon's residence of Longwood House.

Longwood was eight kilometres from Jamestown. It was guarded at two perimeters. The inner zone, within which Napoleon could walk and ride without restriction, stretched for a six-kilometre radius from the house. It was enclosed by a dry stone wall, with a sentry at every 50 paces. At night, during which no one was allowed to enter or leave Longwood, the sentries stood immediately outside the house at 15-pace intervals, with muskets loaded and bayonets fixed. The outer perimeter, which extended for about 19 kilometres, was defended by sentry posts and mounted guards. If Napoleon wanted to move beyond this area, he had to give prior notice and be accompanied by a British officer.

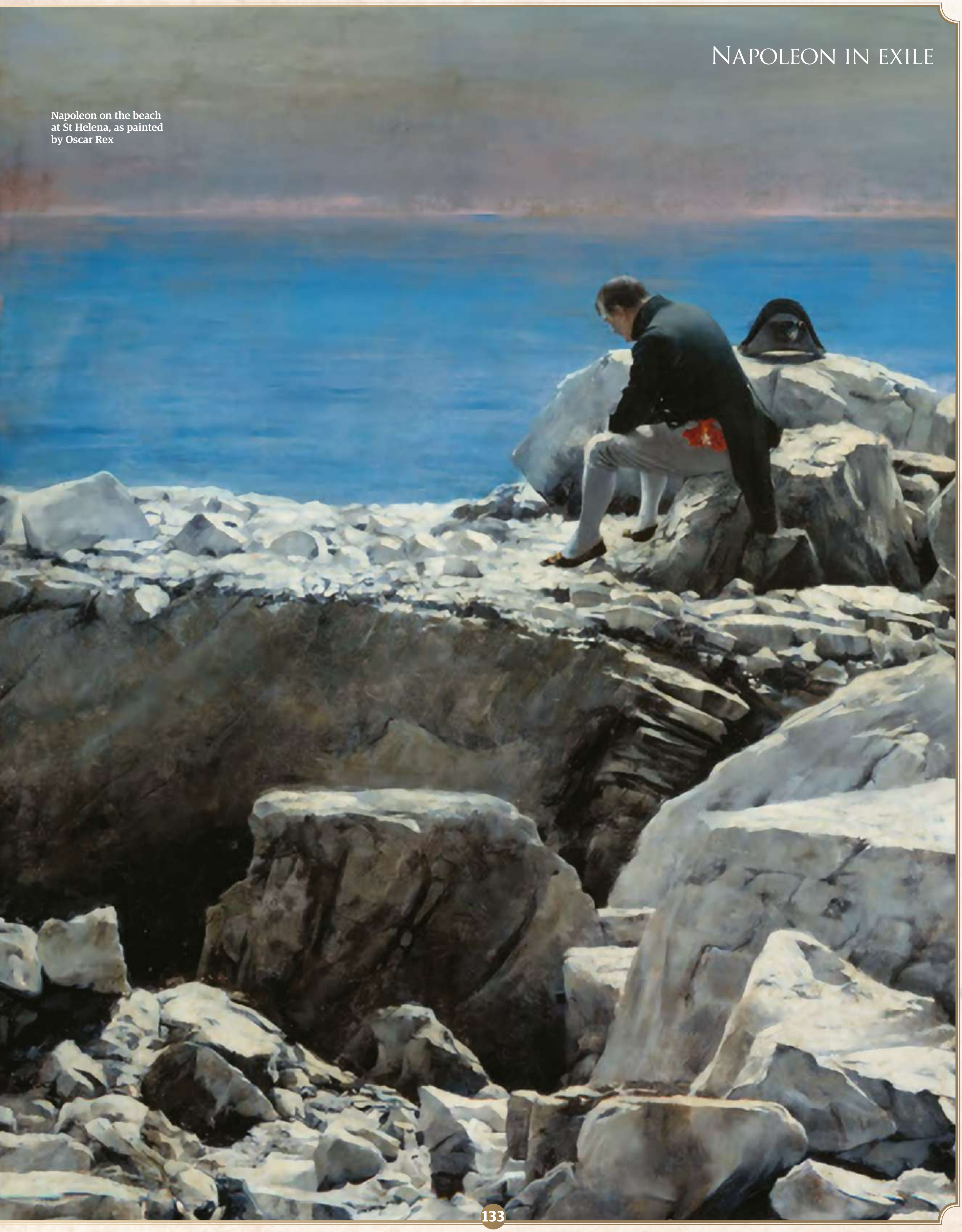
A British captain resided permanently at Longwood. He had to report to Governor Hudson Lowe twice a day with confirmation that he had seen Napoleon. No one was allowed to communicate with Napoleon or his companions without prior authorisation. Any letters going to or from Longwood House had to first be read by the governor or his London boss, Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies.

The British placed lookout towers on all the major heights. News of suspicious activity could be relayed across the island using semaphore flags. The roads were watched, and there was a curfew on movement outside Jamestown after sunset.

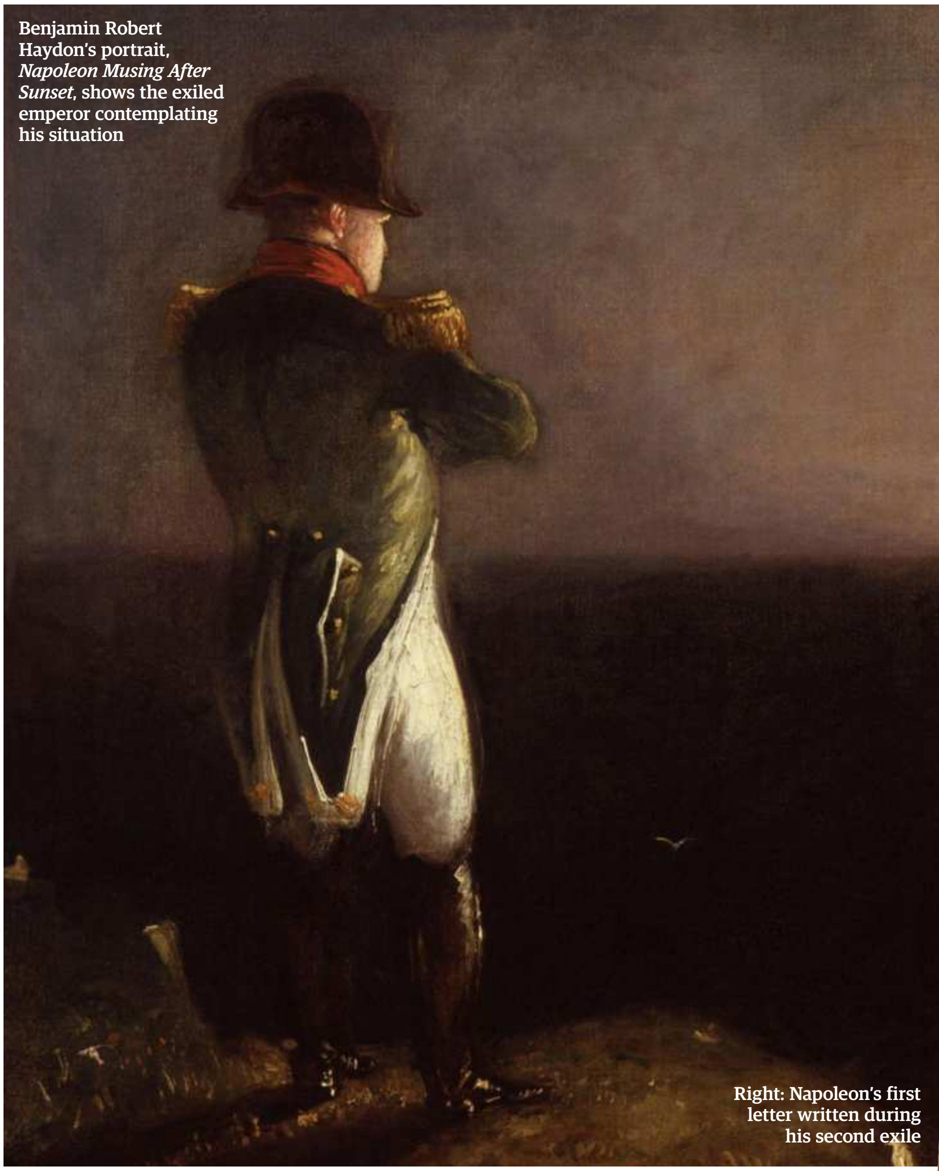
St Helena's coast and the surrounding waters were defended by a naval squadron consisting of three frigates, two men-of-war and six brigs. The latter constantly cruised around the island. From the lookout towers, ships could be seen as far as 90 kilometres away. Any vessel approaching St Helena was accompanied until it was either given permission to anchor or was sent away. No boats were allowed to arrive or leave between sunset and sunrise.

Detailing the security arrangements in a letter to a friend, the Marquis de Montchenu, France's commissioner to the island, wrote "escape seems to be materially out of the question."

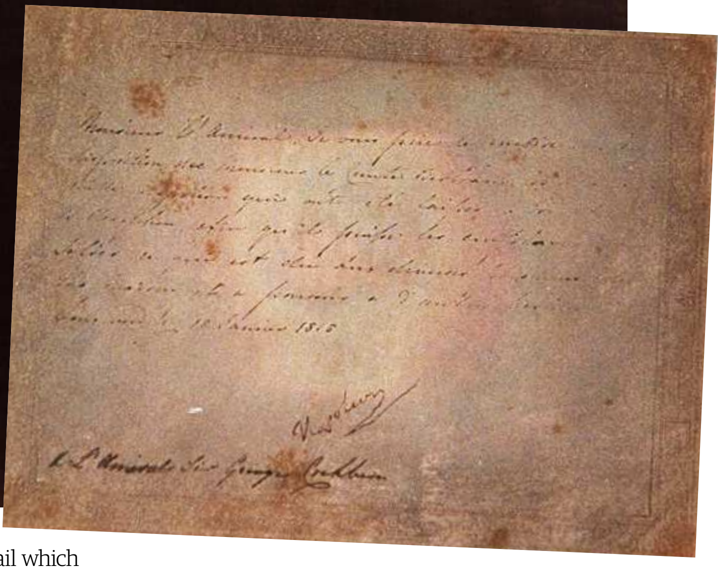
Was it, though? This elaborate British cordon had holes. Napoleon and his entourage were able to



Napoleon on the beach at St Helena, as painted by Oscar Rex



Benjamin Robert Haydon's portrait, *Napoleon Musing After Sunset*, shows the exiled emperor contemplating his situation



Right: Napoleon's first letter written during his second exile

bribe captains of merchant vessels, and even British officers, to carry letters off the island. European visitors smuggled in messages and gifts for Napoleon. There are several examples of people entering Longwood House without permission. In January 1816, Napoleon escaped from his escort while out riding. He headed to Powell's Valley, an area less than two kilometres from the ocean, where there were no guards posted - an omission that was soon fixed.

Napoleon hated the restrictions on his freedom. He detested Hudson Lowe and did everything he could to make the governor's job harder. He spent long periods inside Longwood, observing his captors. He threatened to shoot anyone who invaded his privacy. The captain who was supposed to be reporting on his whereabouts had to try to spot Napoleon from a distance, or rely on reports from members of Napoleon's household that he was still there.

It wasn't long before details of escape plots fell into the governor's hands. One intercepted letter, postmarked March 1816, referred to a boat that would "drift to the back of the island… in the shape of an old cask, but so constructed that by pulling at both ends to be sea worthy, and both boat and sail which will be found inside will be painted to correspond with the colour of the sea." Napoleon was expected to slide down a cliff on a rope to reach this vessel, the ultimate destination being the United States.

In July 1816, Lowe received a dispatch from Lord Bathurst warning him about a plan by the crew of a privateer, called the True Blooded Yankee, to sail from Brazil. These "buccaneers of the most enterprising and desperate character… talked of fitting out a schooner or two and it was believed they meant to send one to Tristan da Cunha and keep one cruising at a certain distance from St Helena as a point to which Napoleon might steer if he could be apprised of their intentions and could contrive to push off in a boat." Bathurst ordered Lowe to send a small force to occupy Tristan da Cunha, an island 1,900 kilometres south of St Helena, so that it could not be used as a base for a rescue attempt. The British had already occupied Ascension Island for the same reason.

The following year, a former member of Napoleon's imperial guard, Nicholas Raoul, told French diplomats in Philadelphia that he had been tasked by Napoleon's brother Joseph (then living in the city) with organising a plan to rescue Napoleon. He recruited men and officers in the US, where there were many Bonapartist exiles, as well as the procurement and armament of two schooners: one at Baltimore and the other at Annapolis. A third schooner would leave Philadelphia for St Helena, "with the object of observing the position of the English cruisers and the strength of the English forces, and turning back to meet the expedition with a report of it."

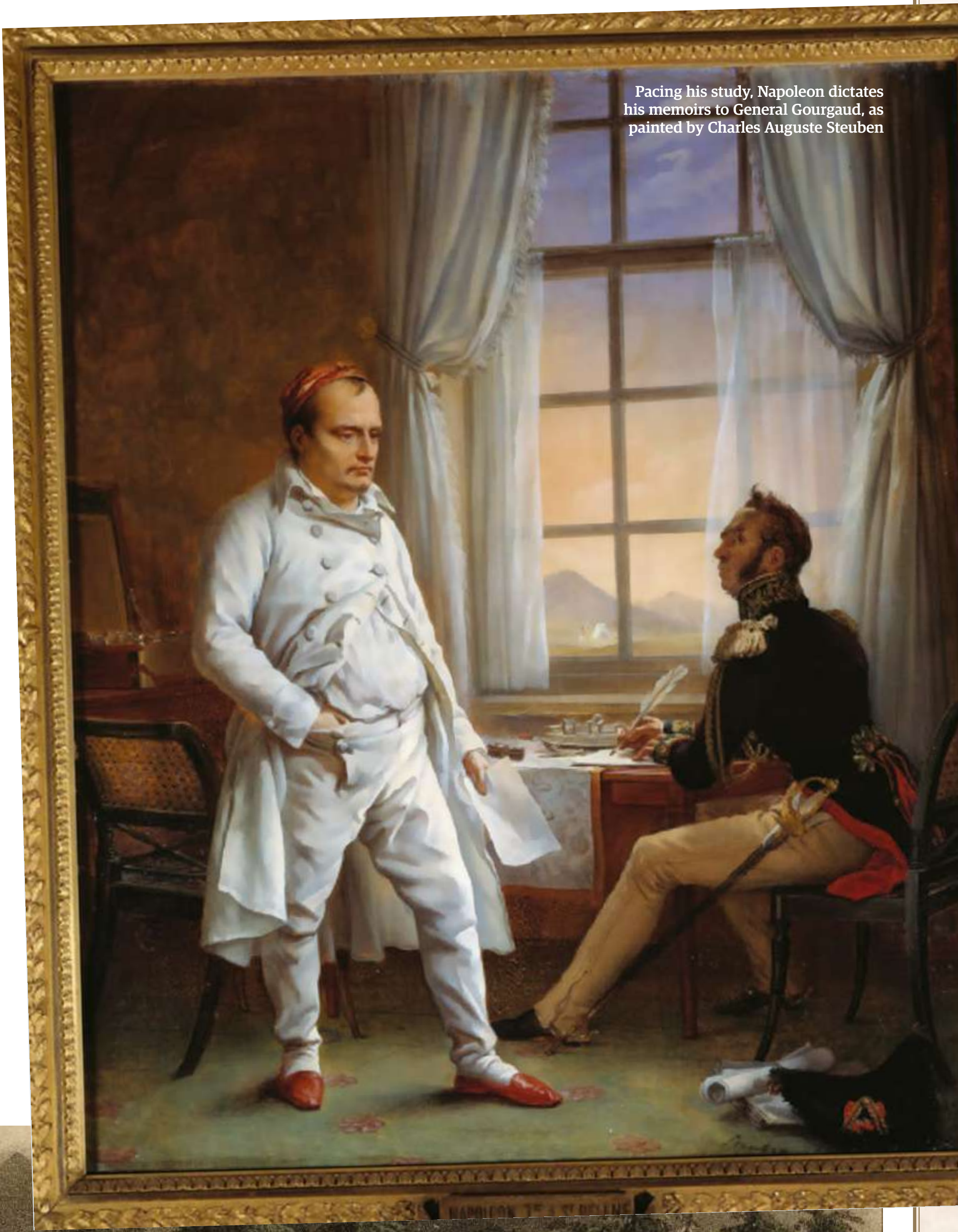
> "THE BRITISH AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS TOOK RESCUE PLANS VERY SERIOUSLY"

According to Raoul, a French colonel had already gone with 32 officers to Pernambuco, in northeast Brazil, to prepare a staging base on the island of Fernando de Noronha, 350 kilometres off the Brazilian coast. Here, the American schooners, with some 80 officers and 700 men, would be joined by a 74-gun ship commanded by renegade British admiral Lord Thomas Cochrane, carrying 800 men and 200 to 300 officers. This force would sail for St Helena and destroy the ships defending the island. It would then attack at three points: Jamestown in the north, Sandy Bay in the south, and Prosperous Bay near Longwood. The first landing would divert the English troops. The second would capture the island's fortifications. The third would retrieve Napoleon and put him on a ship to the United States.

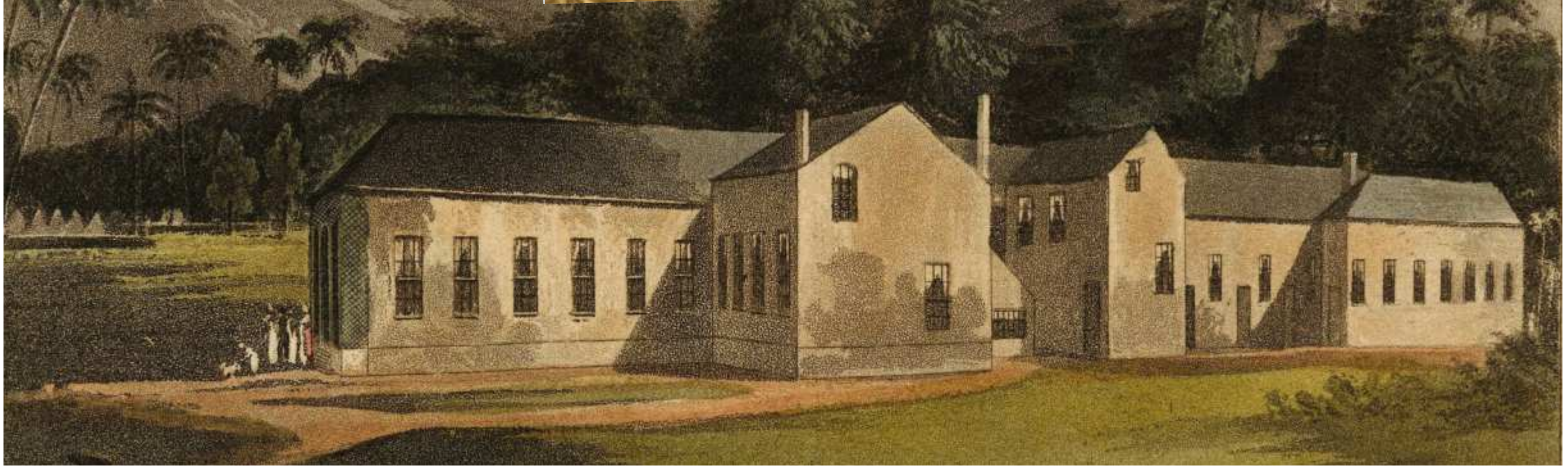
Further investigation contradicted many of Raoul's claims. In November 1817, one of the Frenchmen at Pernambuco confessed to a different version of the plot: "It was intended to fit out one or more fast sailing vessels… sufficiently capacious to contain several small steamboats. These vessels after making the island of St Helena, were to keep at a considerable distance from it… The steam boats were then to be prepared, and as they were to be sent at night and manned by persons determined to brave every danger, it was hoped that some one of them might be fortunate enough to succeed in setting their late Emperor at liberty." After informing the Foreign Office, local British and French officials kept a close watch on Napoleonic veterans in the Americas.

Many escape rumours were probably spread by Napoleon's supporters with the aim of scaring European governments and keeping their own hopes up. After news of yet another conspiracy reached London in November 1818, a newspaper commented, "It is inconceivable how much this man, the scourge of the world, still excites public attention."

Even so, the British and French governments took attempted rescue plans seriously, particularly in light of what was happening in Europe. In September 1820, Bathurst sent Lowe his starkest warning yet: "The reports which you have recently made of the



Pacing his study, Napoleon dictates his memoirs to General Gourgaud, as painted by Charles Auguste Steuben



Longwood House, the home of Napoleon during his exile on St Helena

THE COST OF CONTAINING NAPOLEON

Napoleon arrived on St Helena with an entourage of 24 people, including counts and generals, their wives and children, and servants. All of these people had to be provided for. The British government stipulated that the expenses of Napoleon's household should not exceed £8,000 per year, which was the allowance for a British general of the highest rank. But it was not long before the costs of provisioning Longwood soared to an estimated £20,000. Some of this could be explained by shortages of supplies and some price-gouging, with the influx of people to the island. But it was also due to the extravagant tastes of Napoleon's companions.

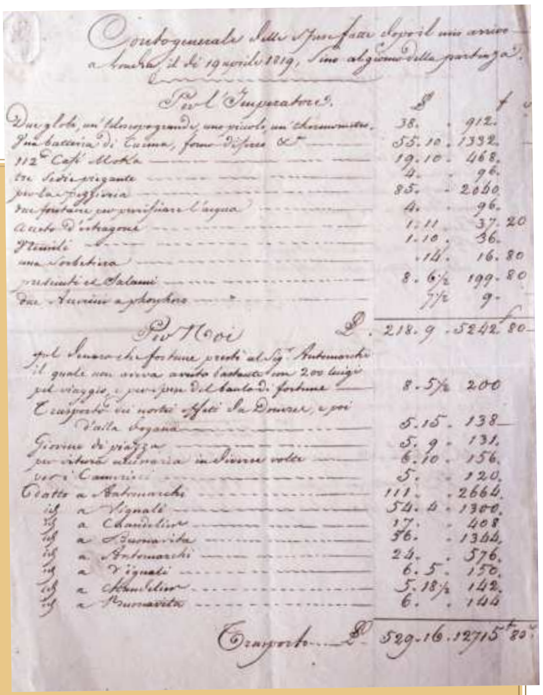
Every day the purveyors had to furnish "90 pounds of beef, six chickens, 74lbs bread, 5lbs butter, 2lbs of lard, 9lbs sugar, 1¼lbs coffee, 1lb tea, 9lbs wax candles, 30 eggs, 1lb cheese, 5lbs flour, 7lbs salt meat, 2¾ hundred-weight firewood, three bottles of beer, vegetables, fruit, oil and vinegar, seven bottles of Champagne or Graves, one bottle Madeira, one bottle Constantia, six bottles of ordinary wine, and each servant was also entitled to one bottle of Cape or Canary wine each day."

Every fortnight, the following was provided: "Eight ducks, two turkeys, two geese, two sugar-loaves, half a sack of rice, two hams of up to 14lbs, 45 bushels of coal, 7lbs of butter, salt, mustard, pepper, capers, lamp oil, peas, fish to the value of £4, milk £5."

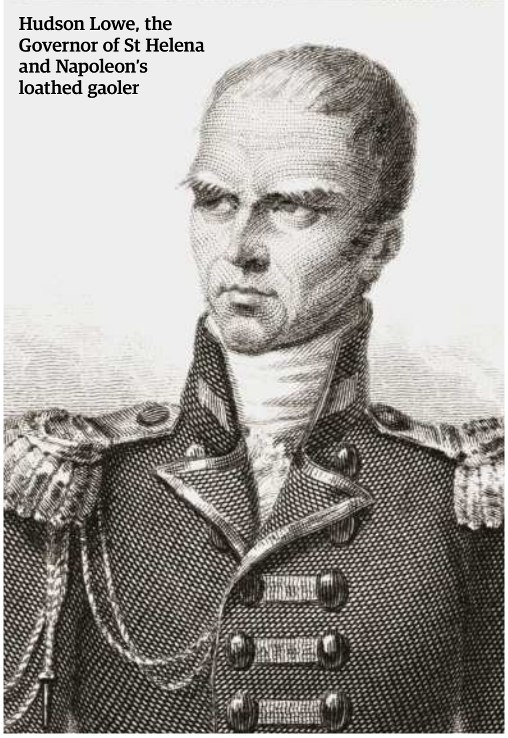
The volume of alcohol consumed was particularly shocking to the British and became a matter for discussion in the House of Commons. Excluding children and servants, there were nine adults in Napoleon's household, plus Napoleon. In one fortnight, they went through 266 bottles of wine (almost two bottles per person per day) plus 42 bottles of porter.

Governor Hudson Lowe insisted that Napoleon economise. In protest, Napoleon – who was far from destitute – instructed his staff to sell some of the silver tableware he had brought with him from France. This had the desired result of making the British look mean. Lowe finally succeeded in persuading Lord Bathurst to raise Napoleon's allowance to £12,000 per year.

The Longwood allowance was relatively small in the scale of expenses associated with keeping Napoleon captive. There was pay and provisions for the additional troops. There was the additional ordnance. There was the governor's salary (£12,000, which also included the allowance for Lowe's household). There was also the expense of the naval squadron. In 1816, the estimated annual cost of confining Napoleon on St Helena – including Napoleon's increased allowance – was £96,032. That is equivalent to roughly £7,884,300 per year today. Multiplying by the five and a half years Napoleon spent on St Helena brings the total cost of his imprisonment in the range of £43.4 million.



A letter written by Antonio Buonavita in 1819 concerning the supplies to bring to Napoleon I



Hudson Lowe, the Governor of St Helena and Napoleon's loathed gaoler

conduct of General Bonaparte and of his followers make me suspect that he is beginning to entertain serious thoughts of escaping from St Helena, and the accounts which he will have since received of what is passing in Europe will not fail to encourage this project. The overthrow of the Neapolitan Government, the revolutionary spirit which more or less prevails over all Italy, and the doubtful state of France itself, must excite his attention, and clearly show that a crisis is fast approaching, if not already arrived, when his escape would be productive of important consequences. That his partisans are active cannot be doubted; and if he be ever willing to hazard the attempt, he will never allow such an opportunity to escape.

"In what shape and in what manner this attempt will be made, I cannot judge, but I am satisfied this storm will not pass over unnoticed at Longwood. General Bonaparte has money at [his] command; he has partisans in abundance; he has means of communication which your regulations may occasionally intercept but cannot entirely prevent; the times are most favourable for the attempt; and, without thinking that he habitually courts a hazardous enterprise, I cannot persuade myself that he will shrink from one which, if successful, must now promise such important results."

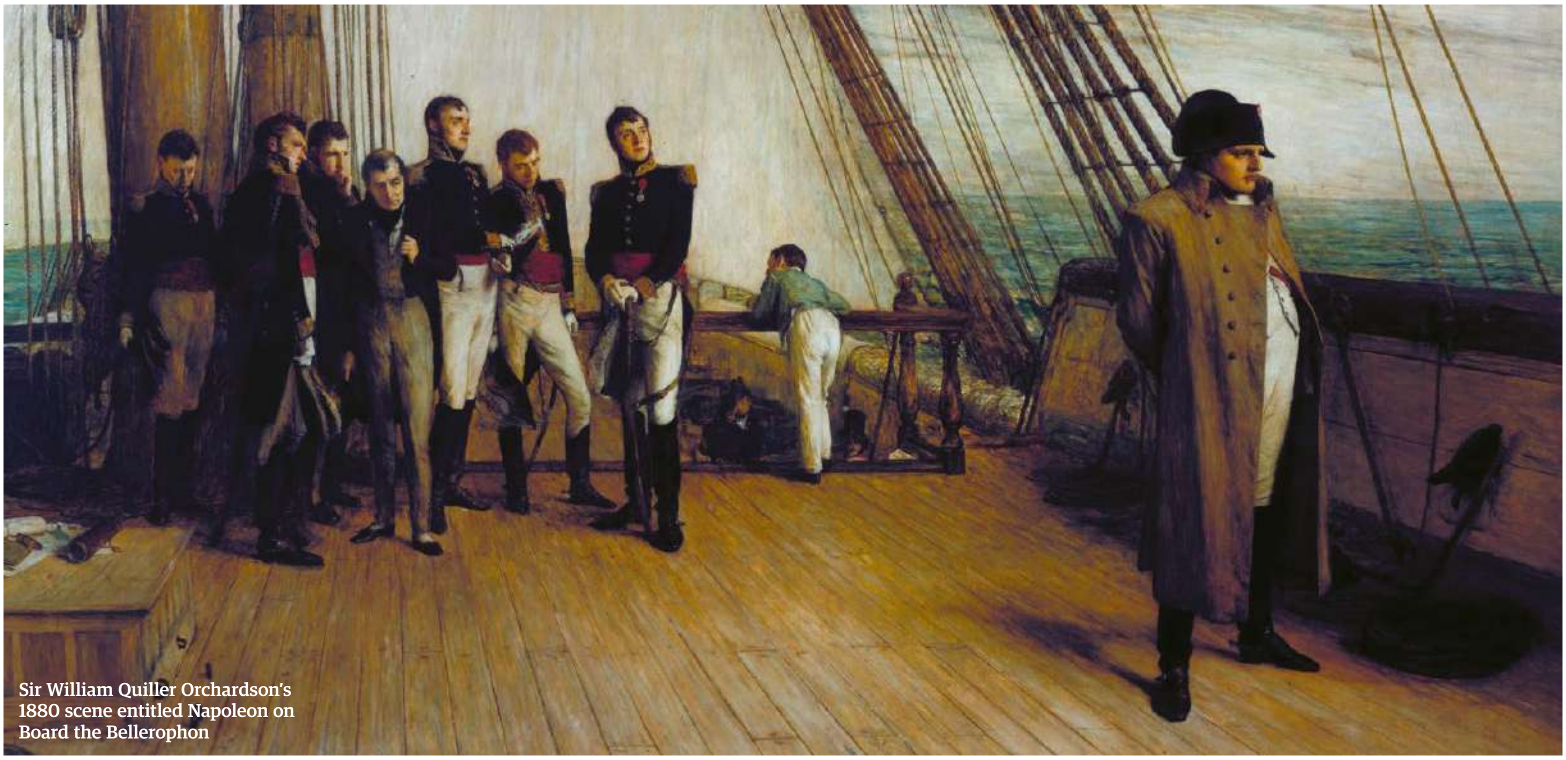
The plot being concocted at the time was the most fantastical of all: to rescue Napoleon using a submarine. This was not as far-fetched as it sounds. A vessel that could briefly operate underwater had been built as early as the 17th century. During the American War of Independence, an American submarine had tried unsuccessfully to blow up a British ship. In 1800, when Napoleon was First Consul, American inventor Robert Fulton conducted several successful trials of a submarine in France. After Napoleon withdrew his support, Fulton moved to England where he may have met Irish adventurer Thomas Johnson. When Fulton returned to the US, Johnson claimed to have acquired Fulton's plans and considered himself competent to carry them out.

During the War of 1812, the British government commissioned Johnson to build a submarine, which he apparently did. In early 1820, officers were sent to determine whether the vessel was worth the £100,000 Johnson wanted for it. They paid him less than £5,000.

Johnson later claimed to have constructed two steam-powered submarines, the Eagle and the smaller Etna, for the express purpose of rescuing Napoleon. Equipped with 20 torpedoes, the two vessels would anchor along the coast near Longwood, stay submerged during the day and then surface at night. "Everything being then perfectly in order, I should then go on shore, provided with some other small articles, such as a ball of strong twine, an iron bolt, with a block, which I would sink into the ground at the top of the rock, opposite Longwood House, and abreast of the submarine ships. I should then obtain my introduction to his Imperial Majesty, and communicate my plan."

Johnson's plan was to disguise himself and Napoleon, and lower Napoleon down the side of a cliff to the Etna. He would then "cast off our moorings, and haul alongside the Eagle, and… get under way as soon as it became dark. In this position I should propel by steam until I had given the island a good berth, and then ship our masts and make sail, steering for the United States. I calculated that no hostile ship or ships could impede our progress… as in the event of an attack I should haul our sails, and strike yards and masts (which would only occupy about 40 minutes), and then submerge. Under water we should wait the approach of the enemy, and then, by the aid of the little Etna, attaching the torpedo to her bottom, affect her destruction in 15 minutes."

Johnson may have actually launched a submarine in late 1820. The painter Walter Greaves claimed his father, who owned a boat yard at Chelsea, said "there was a mysterious boat that was intended



Sir William Quiller Orchardson's 1880 scene entitled Napoleon on Board the Bellerophon

to go under water… for the purpose of getting Napoleon off the island of St Helena. So, on one dark night in November, she proceeded down the river. She managed to get below London Bridge. The officers boarding her, Capt Johnson in the meantime threatened to shoot them. But they paid no attention to his threats, seized her and… destroyed her." Johnson himself claimed "the vessels were laid down to be coppered when news arrived of the exile's death" in 1821.

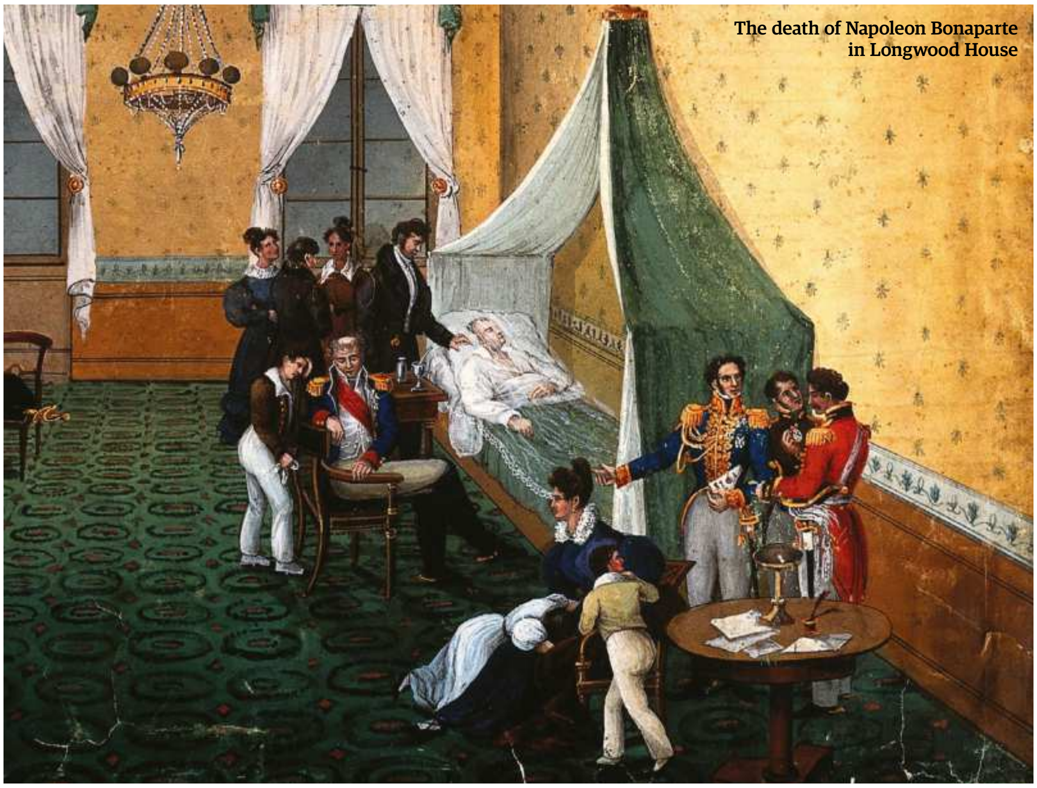
Even if Johnson or another potential rescuer had managed to make it to St Helena, would Napoleon have been willing to risk his life in an escape attempt?

According to Napoleon's companions on St Helena, the exiled Emperor considered several proposed plans, but refused to go through with any of them. Responding to one, Napoleon said he "believed in the success of his plan, but that his resolution not to struggle against his destiny being immovable, he must persist in refusing his offers." More to the point, Napoleon considered it beneath his dignity to disguise himself or hide like a common criminal. After Napoleon's death, Generals Henri Bertrand and Charles Montholon, who were with Napoleon on St Helena, told Lord Holland "he was a man never to attempt anything where concealment or disguise or bodily exertion was required. If he was not able to walk on board the ship with hat on his head and his sword at his side, he would take no measures to go."

Another companion, General Gaspard Gourgaud, told the Russian commissioner to St Helena, Count Balmain, that Napoleon could "go to America whenever he wishes." When Balmain asked why Napoleon hadn't done just that, Gourgaud replied, "However unhappy he is here, he secretly enjoys the sense of importance which is evident in his being guarded so closely and the constant interest which all the European Powers take in him. Several times he has told us: 'I cannot live as a private personage. I would rather be a prisoner than to be free in the United States.'"

According to Montholon, Napoleon feared he would be assassinated or forgotten if he went to the United States. He also entertained hopes that an eventual change of government in London or Paris would end his captivity. He told Gourgaud, "When Louis XVIII dies, great events may take place; and if Lord Holland should then be Prime Minister of England, they may bring me back to Europe. But what I most hope for is the death of the Prince Regent, which will place the young Princess Charlotte on the English throne. She will bring me back to Europe."

Despite these dreams of returning to France, Napoleon died on St Helena on 5 May 1821 at the age of 51. His body finally did make it off the island, 19 years later, when it was repatriated to France and laid to rest in Les Invalides in Paris.



The death of Napoleon Bonaparte in Longwood House

THE END OF AN EMPEROR

Napoleon died at St Helena on 5 May 1821 at the age of 51. While historians disagree about his legacy, the Napoleonic legend lives on

Words **Shannon Selin**

Shortly after he moved into Longwood House, Napoleon began to complain of various ailments, including headaches, fever, constipation, swollen legs and stomach pain. Doctors thought he had liver disease. Governor Hudson Lowe, however, thought Napoleon was pretending to be ill in the hope of being removed from St Helena.

In January 1821, Napoleon noticeably declined. The pain in his stomach grew worse. He stopped going out. He lost his appetite. He didn't feel like dressing. To the distress of those around him, he refused almost all offers of medication. His preferred remedy was a hot bath. On 17 April, Napoleon told British surgeon Dr Archibald Arnott that medical science could do no more for him. "I know that I have none of the symptoms of death, but I am so weak that it would not take a cannon ball to kill me; a grain of sand would suffice." General Henri Bertrand wrote, "Tears came to my eyes, as I looked at this man, formerly so terrifying, who had commanded so proudly and in a manner so absolute, now reduced to begging for a spoonful of coffee… asking permission again and again without obtaining it."

During the night of 4 May, Napoleon suffered from pain, hiccups and vomiting. He became delirious. Although there were several people attending him, it was hard for them to make out what he was saying. There are thus differing accounts of Napoleon's last words. All witnesses agree that he said something about the army, probably "tête d'armée" (head of the army). In the morning, Napoleon slipped into unconsciousness. At 5.49pm on 5 May 1821, he drew his last breath.

The following afternoon, Napoleon's personal physician, Dr François Antommarchi, conducted an autopsy, assisted by seven British doctors, including Dr Arnott. They concluded that Napoleon had died from a cancerous growth in his stomach. While rumours later surfaced that Napoleon had been poisoned with arsenic, there is no evidence of this. In 2008, tests on samples of Napoleon's hair found no significant difference in arsenic levels between when Napoleon was a boy on Corsica and during his final days on St Helena.

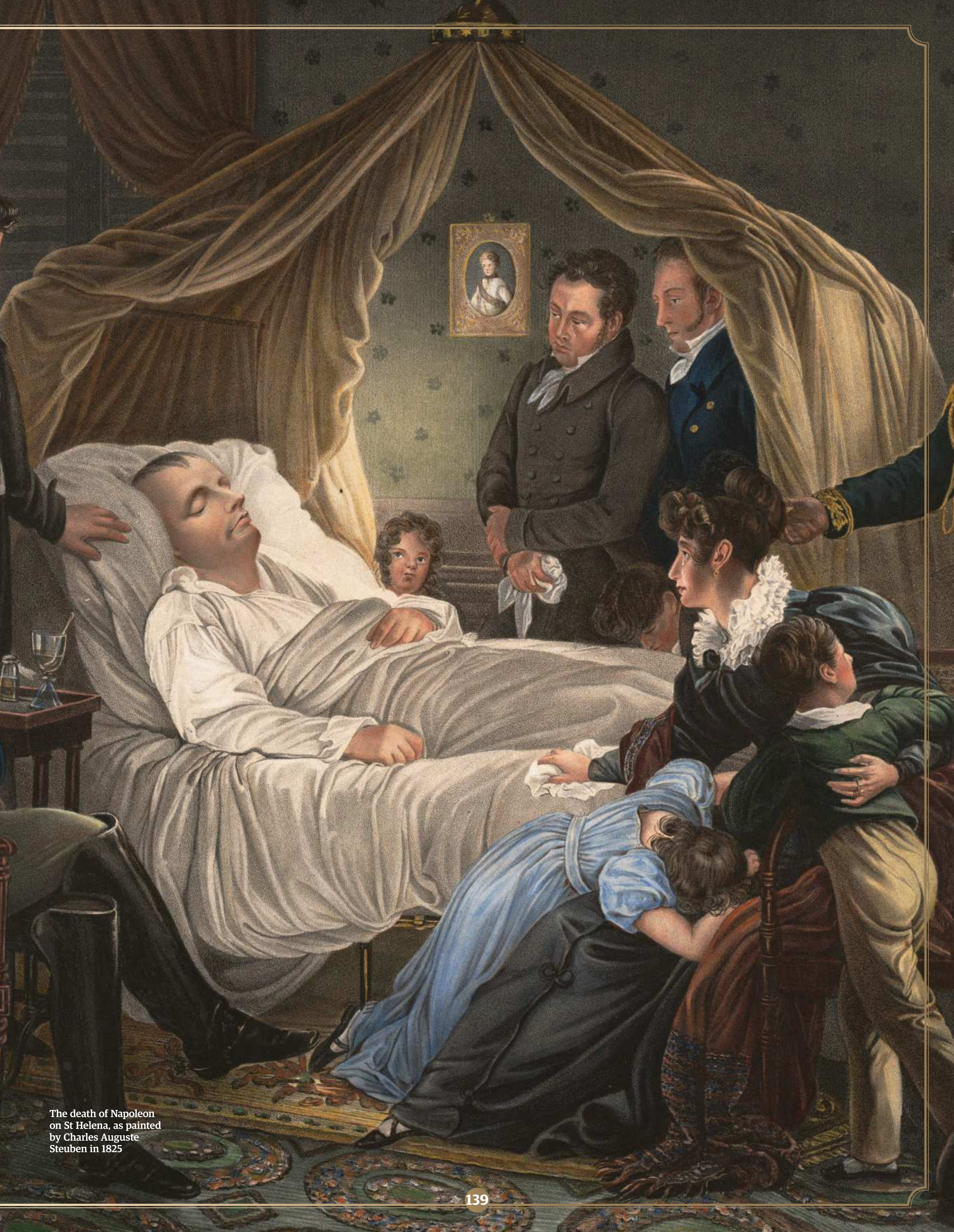
> "THE BODY WAS PLACED IN FOUR SEALED CASKETS, ONE INSIDE THE OTHER"

On 7 May, British surgeon Dr Francis Burton made a wax or plaster mould of Napoleon's face, aided by Dr Antommarchi. Several Napoleonic death masks are claimed to have been made from this mould, which has since been destroyed. The death mask of Napoleon at the Château de Malmaison is the one with the clearest provenance. Dated August 1821, it was perhaps the first mask made from the original cast. Antommarchi also made a second mould from the original cast. From this, a number of copies of Napoleon's death mask were made, in plaster and in bronze.

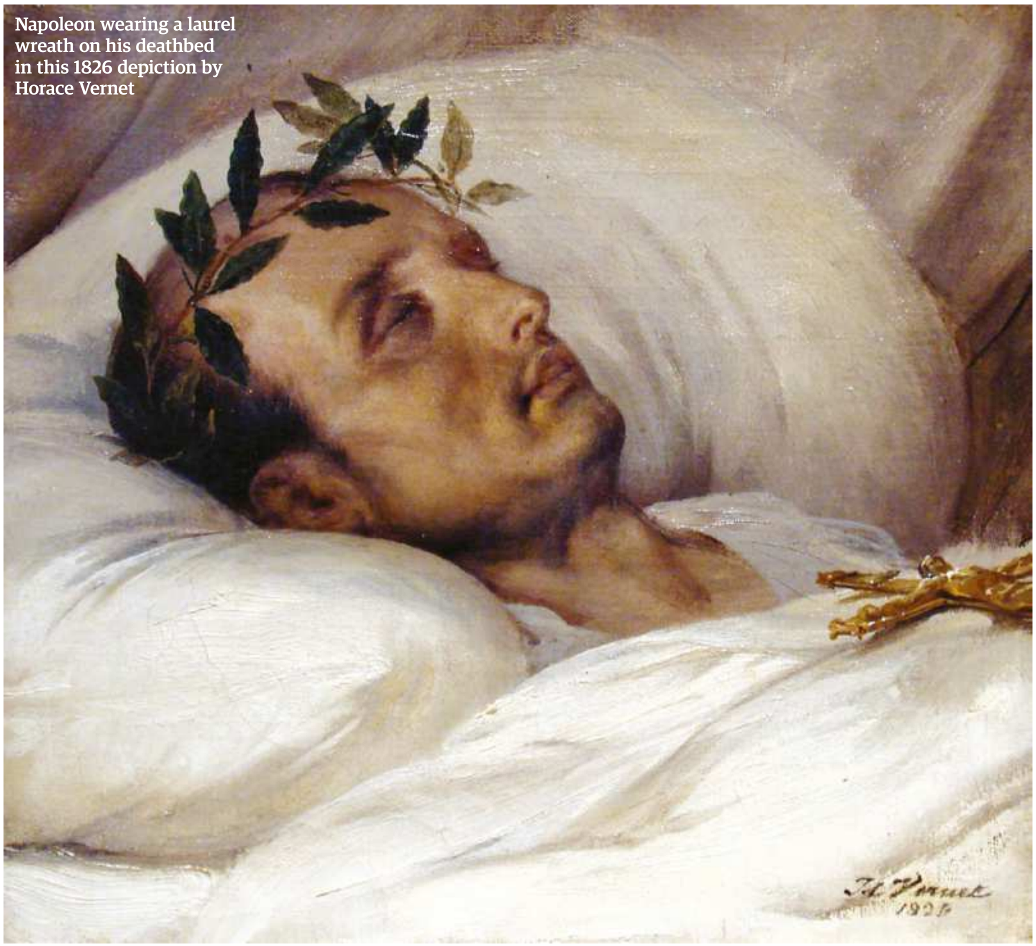
Napoleon's body was dressed in his favourite green-and-white uniform of a colonel of the chasseurs of the Imperial Guard, and his famous black bicorn hat. Fearing relic seekers would try and plunder the body, Governor Lowe aimed to make Napoleon's grave as secure as possible. The body, along with two silver vases containing Napoleon's heart and his stomach, was placed in four sealed caskets, one inside the other. The first was made of tin, the second of mahogany, the third of lead, and the fourth also of mahogany.

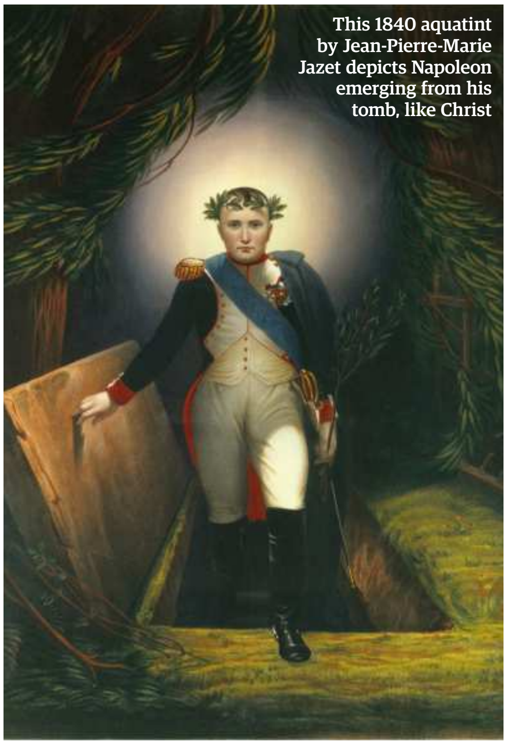
In his will, Napoleon had requested interment "on the banks of the Seine, in the midst of the French people whom I loved so well". He told his companions that if he were laid to rest on St Helena, he wished it to be in nearby Geranium Valley (now Sane Valley). This was a peaceful place with willow trees and a spring from which the drinking water for Longwood was drawn.

On 9 May, there was a funeral mass at Longwood House. Napoleon's weighty casket was lifted onto a carriage. Drawn by four horses, led by four grooms, and escorted by 12 British grenadiers, the hearse was followed by members of Napoleon's household, Governor Lowe and his staff, army and naval officers, and St Helena notables. The entire British garrison – some 2,000 soldiers – lined the route to the valley. They stood with firearms reversed and flags lowered while their bands played mournful music. Warships in the harbour fired salutes, and guns on shore responded.



The death of Napoleon on St Helena, as painted by Charles Auguste Steuben in 1825


Napoleon wearing a laurel wreath on his deathbed in this 1826 depiction by Horace Vernet


This 1840 aquatint by Jean-Pierre-Marie Jazet depicts Napoleon emerging from his tomb, like Christ

At the grave, prayers were recited. The casket was then lowered into the tomb, made of brick and stone. Napoleon's feet pointed towards the east. The artillery fired three successive volleys of 15 guns each. After the burial, the crowd rushed forward to strip the willows of branches, as souvenirs.

The tomb was sealed with an enormous stone, and then topped with bricks, cement, clay and more stones. It was left without an inscription. Napoleon's French companions wanted it to say "Napoleon", his Imperial title. Lowe insisted on "Napoleon Bonaparte", befitting a General. Rather than agree, the French let the grave go nameless.

Napoleon remained interred on St Helena for 19 years. Although Britain regarded its custody of the body as temporary, French King Louis XVIII and his successor, Charles X, had no desire to revive Bonapartist sentiments by bringing the emperor's remains to France. Even after 1830, when Charles X was overthrown and Louis Philippe, the Duke of Orleans, became King of the French, there was little appetite for Napoleon's return. It took the pressure of historian Adolphe Thiers, who in 1840 was serving as French prime minister and foreign minister, to convince a reluctant Louis Philippe to support the repatriation of Napoleon's remains. Thiers was writing a 20-volume history of the Consulate and Empire. He regarded the retour des cendres (return of the ashes) as an opportunity to rehabilitate the period's reputation, unite the French people, and increase the government's popularity.

> "EACH OF THE FOUR CASKETS WAS OPENED AND NAPOLEON'S BODY EXPOSED"

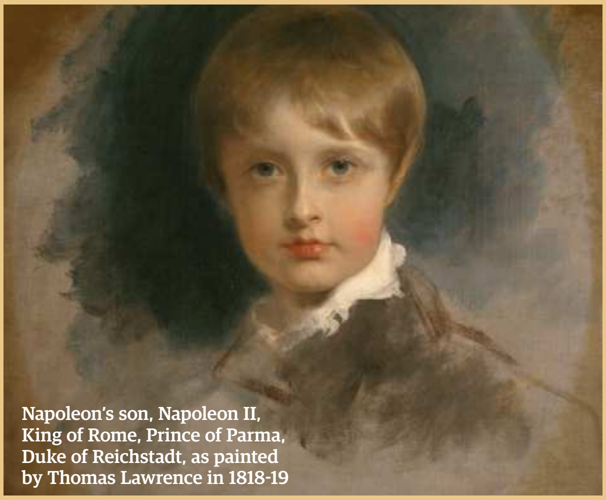
THE SHORT LIFE OF NAPOLEON II

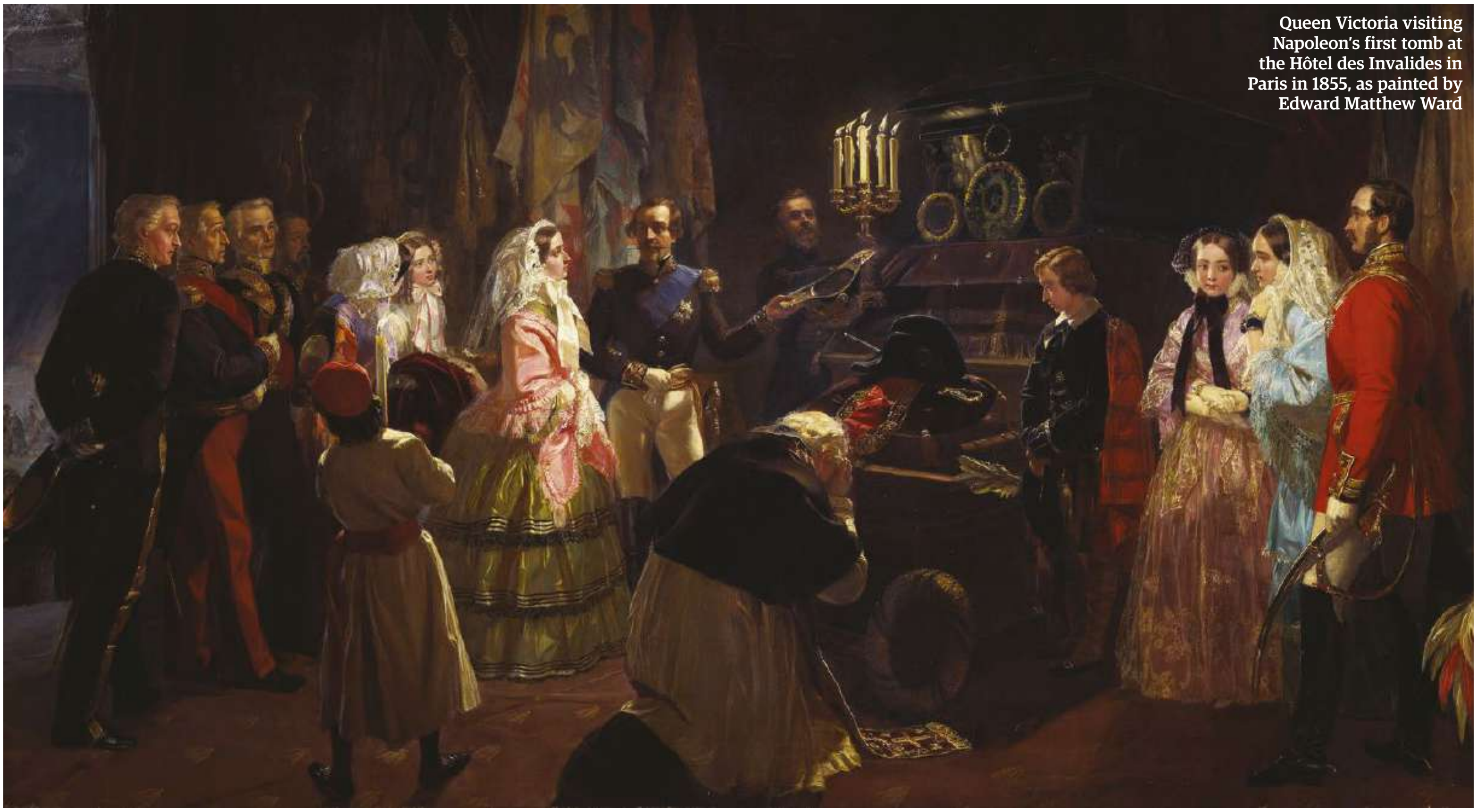
Napoleon's only legitimate child, Napoleon François Charles Joseph Bonaparte, was born on 20 March 1811, after a difficult labour for Empress Marie Louise. Napoleon gave the child the title of King of Rome. He lavished him with gifts, servants, and attention.

This gilded life in the French court came to an end in 1814. Upon Napoleon's exile to Elba, Marie Louise and her son moved to her father's court in Austria. When Napoleon returned to France in 1815, they did not join him.

After losing the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon abdicated in favour of Napoleon II, who theoretically ruled from 22 June to 7 July, until the Allies entered Paris and restored Louis XVIII to the throne. When Marie Louise became the Duchess of Parma, her son assumed the title of Prince of Parma. He did not live with his mother, but was instead brought up in Vienna under the watchful eye of his grandfather, Emperor Francis I.

Francis called the boy Franz, and in 1818 gave him the title of Duke of Reichstadt. Franz's keenest desire was to be a soldier. He was delighted when his grandfather appointed him as an army cadet, entitling him to wear a uniform. In 1831, as a lieutenant colonel, Franz received command of an infantry battalion. His military career was cut short when he contracted tuberculosis. He died at Schönbrunn Palace on 22 July 1832, age 21. In his last days he said, "My birth and my death - that is my whole story".


Napoleon's son, Napoleon II, King of Rome, Prince of Parma, Duke of Reichstadt, as painted by Thomas Lawrence in 1818-19



Queen Victoria visiting Napoleon's first tomb at the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris in 1855, as painted by Edward Matthew Ward

> “NAPOLEON'S WISH TO LIE ON THE BANKS OF THE SEINE WAS FINALLY GRANTED”

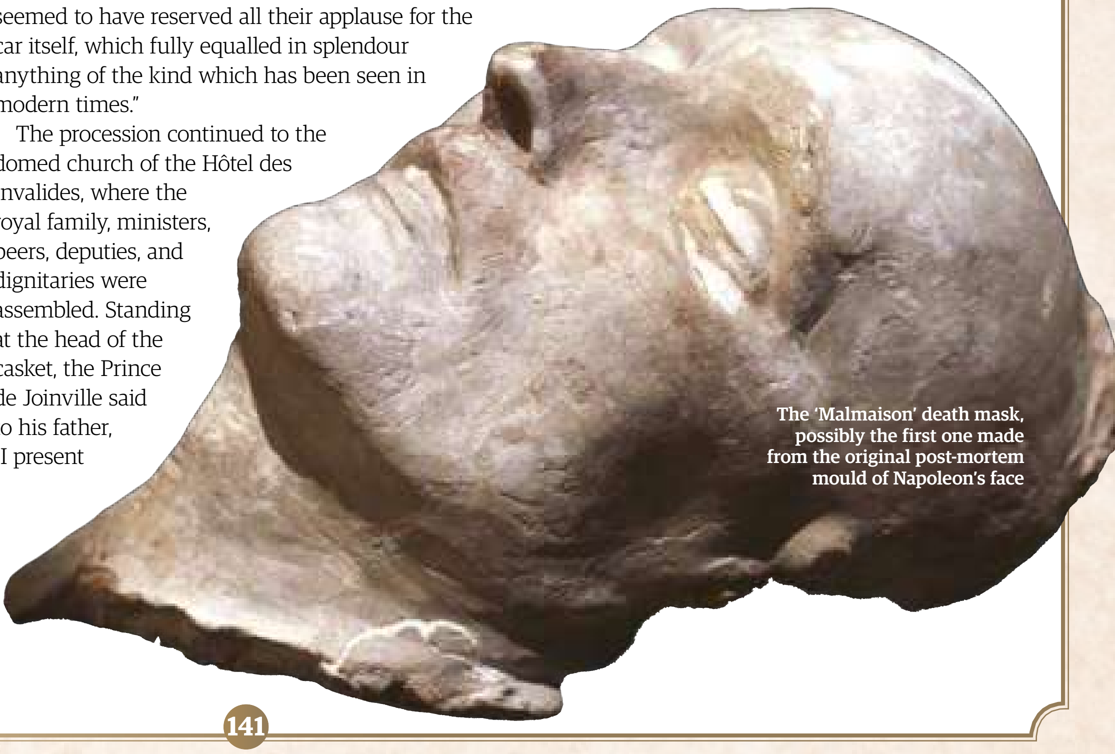
On 8 October 1840, an expedition led by Louis Philippe's son, the Prince of Joinville, arrived at St Helena. On 15 October, Napoleon's grave was opened in the presence of witnesses who had been present at the original burial. Excavators worked through the night to break through the layers of stone, cement and brick. On 16 October, the coffin was lifted out. Each of the four caskets was opened and Napoleon's body was exposed to view. The official report noted: “His features were so little changed that his face was recognized by those who had known him when alive. The different articles which had been deposited in the coffin were found exactly as they had been placed. The hands were singularly well preserved. The uniform, the orders, the hat, were very little changed. His entire person presented the appearance of one lately preserved.”

After this confirmation that Napoleon's body was still there, the caskets were closed and resealed. They were placed in a new lead casket, sent from Paris, which was soldered shut. These were all put inside a new ebony casket, which was locked and put in an oak case. The whole thing weighed a mighty 1,200 kilograms.

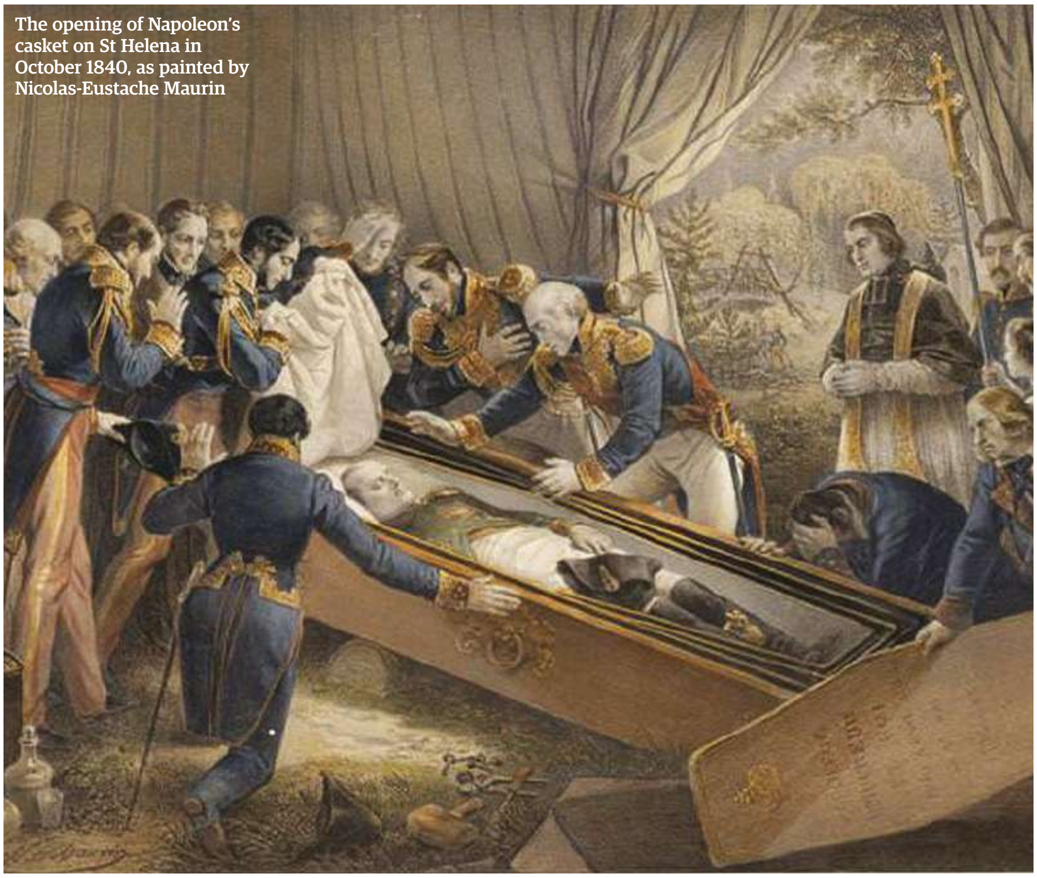
On 30 November, the frigate La Belle Poule arrived in France with Napoleon's remains. After a leisurely journey up the Seine, the casket was transferred on 15 December to an enormous funeral carriage drawn by 16 black horses. People crowded along the richly-decorated route, which led to the Arc de Triomphe, and from there along the Champs-Élysées. A newspaper reported: “When the funeral car appeared, it is impossible to describe the approbation of the beholders. Shouts of admiration spread through all ranks; some few raised their hats and cried, ‘Vive l'Empereur,’ but the majority seemed to have reserved all their applause for the car itself, which fully equalled in splendour anything of the kind which has been seen in modern times.”

The procession continued to the domed church of the Hôtel des Invalides, where the royal family, ministers, peers, deputies, and dignitaries were assembled. Standing at the head of the casket, the Prince de Joinville said to his father, “I present to you the body of the Emperor Napoleon”. Louis Philippe replied, “I receive it in the name of France”. Napoleon's sword and hat were placed on the coffin. The old veterans, who occupied the first row, were deeply moved. The mass commenced, complete with Mozart's *Requiem*. Napoleon's wish to lie on the banks of the Seine was finally granted.

Napoleon's remains lay in the Chapel of Saint-Jérôme at the Hôtel des Invalides for over 20 years. In 1861, a new sarcophagus of red quartzite was completed. On 2 April of that year, Napoleon's body



The ‘Malmaison’ death mask, possibly the first one made from the original post-mortem mould of Napoleon's face

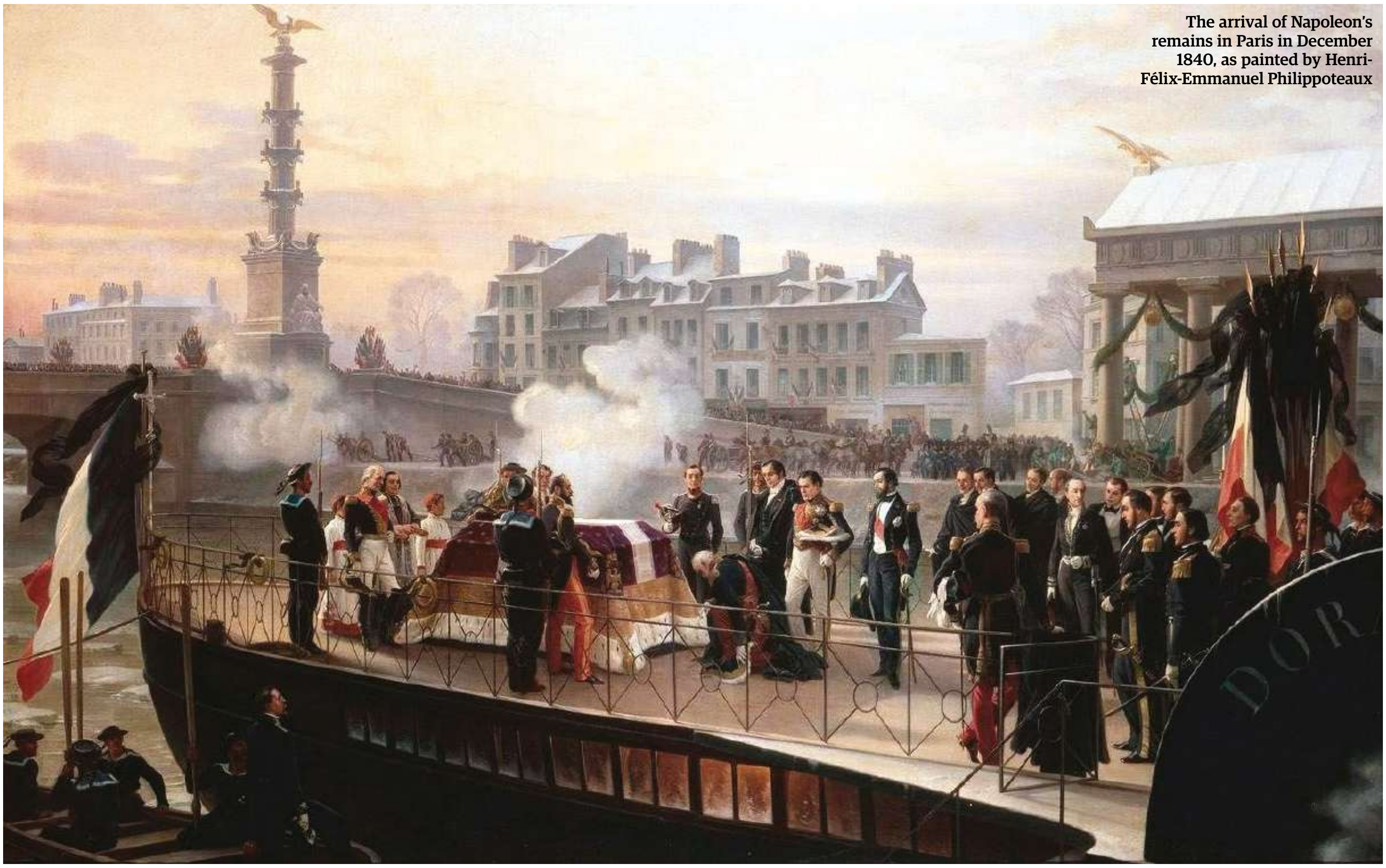


The opening of Napoleon's casket on St Helena in October 1840, as painted by Nicolas-Eustache Maurin

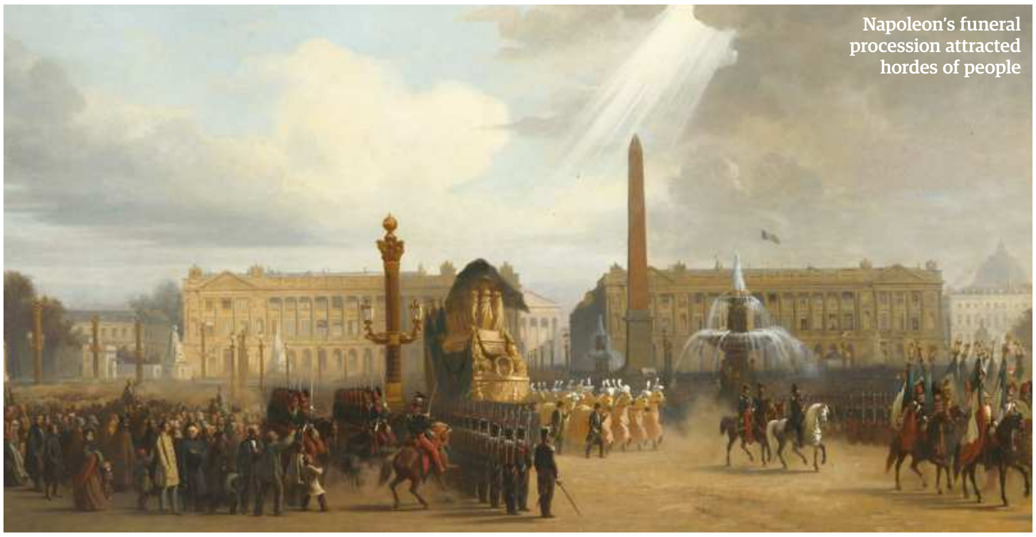
– still in all the caskets – was transferred to the new tomb in a private ceremony attended by Emperor Napoleon III, his immediate family, government ministers and senior officials. This is the tomb in which Napoleon's remains currently rest, beneath the dome of the Hôtel des Invalides.

When news of Napoleon's death reached London in July 1821, *The Times* commented: "Upon the whole, Buonaparte will go down to posterity as a man who, having more good at his disposal than any other potentate of any former age, had actually applied his immense means to the production of a greater share of mischief and misery to his fellow-creatures". In Paris, a liberal paper observed: "History, an impartial judge, will confess that Napoleon has rendered eminent services to the social order… The truth must sit upon his tomb; and let us not be diffident in saying that the prisoner of St Helena will be counted among the great men."

Historians remain divided over Napoleon's legacy. Some regard him as the man who saved France from the chaos of the French Revolution, modernised its government and turned the country into the greatest military power in Europe. They focus on his institutional achievements, including the Napoleonic Code, which remains the basis of the legal system in France, Belgium, and many former French colonies. They note other Napoleonic innovations that survive to this day, including centralised control of France's departments



The arrival of Napoleon's remains in Paris in December 1840, as painted by Henri-Félix-Emmanuel Philippoteaux



Napoleon's funeral procession attracted hordes of people

through the prefecture system, the lycée system of secondary education, the Bank of France, and the gendarmerie. And they point to Napoleon's skill as a military commander, the general who won 52 of the 60 battles he fought.

For others, Napoleon is the man who compromised the gains of the Revolution, brought back the monarchy, saddled the country with a new greedy nobility, and pursued a relentless foreign policy that left France diminished and bankrupt. They point to the number of people who died as a result of the Napoleonic Wars, somewhere in the range of 3.5 million to 6 million, and also the millions of others who were wounded. They note the cities, towns and villages that were looted, bombarded, or burned; the thousands left homeless; the women and girls raped by the Grande Armée. They call attention to the institutions shattered in the territories Napoleon conquered, the damage to the economic life of Europe, and the loss of France's overseas colonies. In 1938, French President Charles de Gaulle wrote: "Napoleon left France crushed, invaded, drained of blood and courage, smaller than when he had taken control of her destinies, condemned to ill-drawn frontiers, the evils of which still persist, and exposed to the distrust of Europe which has weighed upon her to this day".

Regardless of the view of historians, Napoleon has long captured the popular imagination. In his iconic hat, he is recognised around the world. As an individual playing a decisive role on the world stage, Napoleon is worshipped by many as a hero. He has inspired artists, musicians and writers for over 200 years. His name and image have been used to sell everything from antacid to wine. Napoleon's reputation as a myth-like figure is unmatched. He is a man of huge ambition and ability who rose to the pinnacle of success and then wound up like Prometheus, chained to a rock.

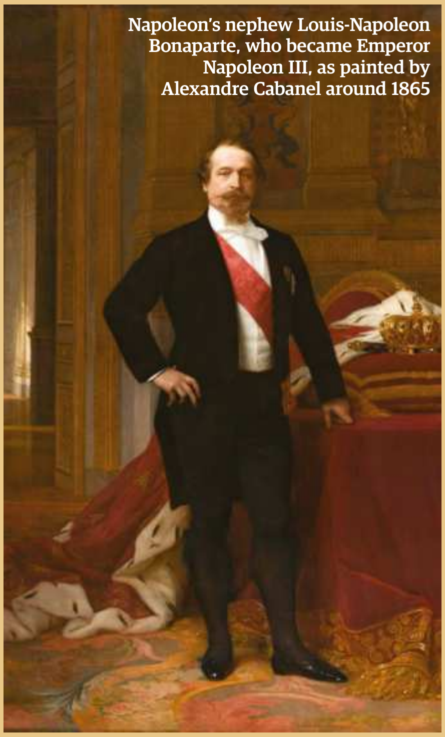
Napoleon's current tomb under the dome of the Hôtel des Invalides was designed by Louis Visconti and completed in 1861

Napoleon's empty tomb on St Helena stands on land sold in 1858 to the French government

In the words of late 19th century British Prime Minister Lord Rosebery: "No name represents so completely and conspicuously dominion, splendour, and catastrophe. He raised himself by the use, and ruined himself by the abuse, of superhuman faculties. He was wrecked by the extravagance of his own genius. No less powers than those which had effected his rise could have achieved his fall."

"AS AN INDIVIDUAL ON THE WORLD STAGE, NAPOLEON IS WORSHIPPED BY MANY AS A HERO"

THE SELF-PROCLAIMED HEIR



Napoleon's nephew Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, who became Emperor Napoleon III, as painted by Alexandre Cabanel around 1865

Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte was born on 20 April 1808, the youngest product of an unhappy marriage between Napoleon's brother Louis and Joséphine's daughter Hortense. After the death of Napoleon II, Louis-Napoleon regarded himself as heir to Napoleon's Empire.

In 1836, he tried unsuccessfully to orchestrate a coup against King Louis Philippe. Following another failed attempt in 1840, he was imprisoned, but then escaped in disguise to England. In 1848, Louis Philippe was dethroned by a revolution. Louis-Napoleon returned to France and was elected president of the Second Republic.

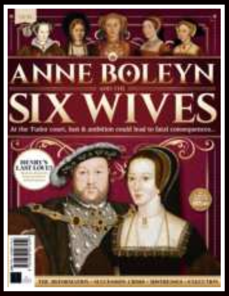
Limited by the constitution to a single term, he brutally seized dictatorial powers in 1851. On 2 December 1852, Louis-Napoleon formally established the Second Empire, assuming the throne as Napoleon III. He undertook steps to modernise France's economy and infrastructure, including the grand reconstruction of Paris. He also increased French influence in Europe, allying with Britain to defeat Russia in the Crimean War, and helping the Italians drive the Austrians out of Italy. Although Napoleon III doubled the size of France's overseas empire, his attempt to impose a French-allied monarchy on Mexico ended in disaster. His reign came to end on 4 September 1870, as a result of his army's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War.

When news reached Paris that Napoleon III had surrendered and been taken prisoner at the Battle of Sedan, the legislature voted to depose him and proclaimed the Third Republic. Napoleon III and his wife Eugénie went into exile in England. He died at Chislehurst on 9 January 1873.

NEW
ALL ABOUT HISTORY
GREATEST EMPIRES
Chart the rise and fall of history's most powerful states
DISCOVER THE EMPIRE ON WHICH THE SUN NEVER SET
AZTECS ◆ OTTOMAN ◆ ABBASID

Discover how the greatest empires in history were forged

NEW
HISTORY OF WAR
KOREAN WAR
THE DRAMATIC STORY OF DECADES OF CONFLICT


ANNE BOLEYN AND THE SIX WIVES

NEW
STALIN
HITLER VS STALIN

NEW
HISTORY OF WAR
DUNKIRK
THE EVENT THAT SHAPED THE COURSE OF HISTORY
THE EVACUATION · KEY PLAYERS · THE AFTERMATH

NEW
History of MAGIC
SECRETS OF SORCERY
ANCIENT TRADITIONS ◇ SPELLS & RITUALS ◇ DIVINATION & GRIMOIRES

Explore the spellbinding world of sorcery, spells and shamanic trances

NEW
History's Greatest Mysteries
UNANSWERED, UNSOLVED AND UNEXPLAINED

NEW
ALL ABOUT HISTORY ANNUAL

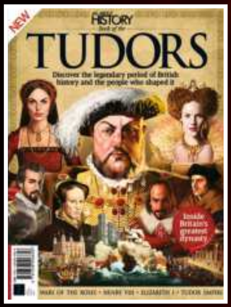
HENRY VIII
Inside the royal court of the unexpected Tudor king

NEW
HISTORY
US PRESIDENTS

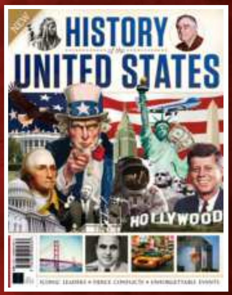
NEW
HISTORY OF WAR
HITLER AT WAR
EXPLORE THE RISE AND FALL OF HISTORY'S GREATEST MONSTER
BATTLES ✦ STRATEGIC MISTAKES

Chart the rise of Hitler and learn how he set Germany on the path to war

NEW
ASSASSINATIONS
THE MURDERS, PLOTS AND CONSPIRACIES THAT CHANGED HISTORY
25


NEW
HISTORY
TUDORS

NEW
GEORGIANS


NEW
HISTORY of the UNITED STATES
HOLLYWOOD

✓ Get great savings when you buy direct from us

✓ 1000s of great titles, many not available anywhere else

✓ World-wide delivery and super-safe ordering

US MILITARY'S GREATEST LEADERS

DEFINING BATTLES OF WORLD WAR II
THE KEY CONFLICTS AND OPERATIONS FROM HISTORY'S BLOODIEST WAR

HISTORY OF Folklore, Fairytales & Monsters

WARS of the ROSES

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

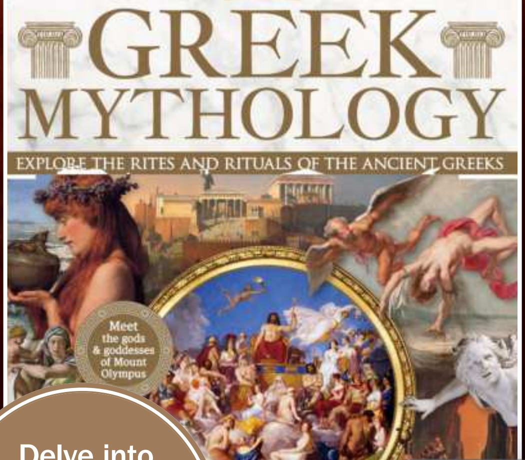
What if... Alternative History

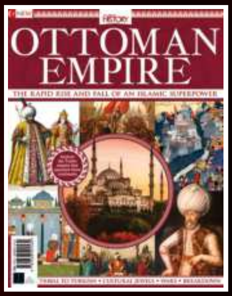
STEP BACK IN TIME WITH OUR HISTORY TITLES

Immerse yourself in a world of emperors, pioneers, conquerors and legends and discover the events that shaped humankind

HISTORY of GHOSTS

HISTORY OF NASA


GREEK MYTHOLOGY
EXPLORE THE RITES AND RITUALS OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS
Meet the gods & goddesses of Mount Olympus


OTTOMAN EMPIRE

ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS

BOOK OF SPELLS

Delve into the myths and monsters of ancient Greece

Follow us on Instagram @futurebookazines

FUTURE

www.magazinesdirect.com

Magazines, back issues & bookazines.

SUBSCRIBE &
SAVE UP TO 61%

Delivered direct to your door
or straight to your device

CLASSIC ROCK
HOW IT WORKS
ULTIMATE QUIZ SPECIAL
FourFourTwo
TOTAL FILM
HISTORY
REVEALED
EDGE
Feel Better
T3
UPGRADE YOUR HOME TECH
NEXT-GEN 8K TV
Digital Camera
SHOOT SHARPER SHOTS!
FREE! WITH THIS ISSUE

Choose from over 80 magazines and make great savings off the store price!

Binders, books and back issues also available

Simply visit www.magazinesdirect.com

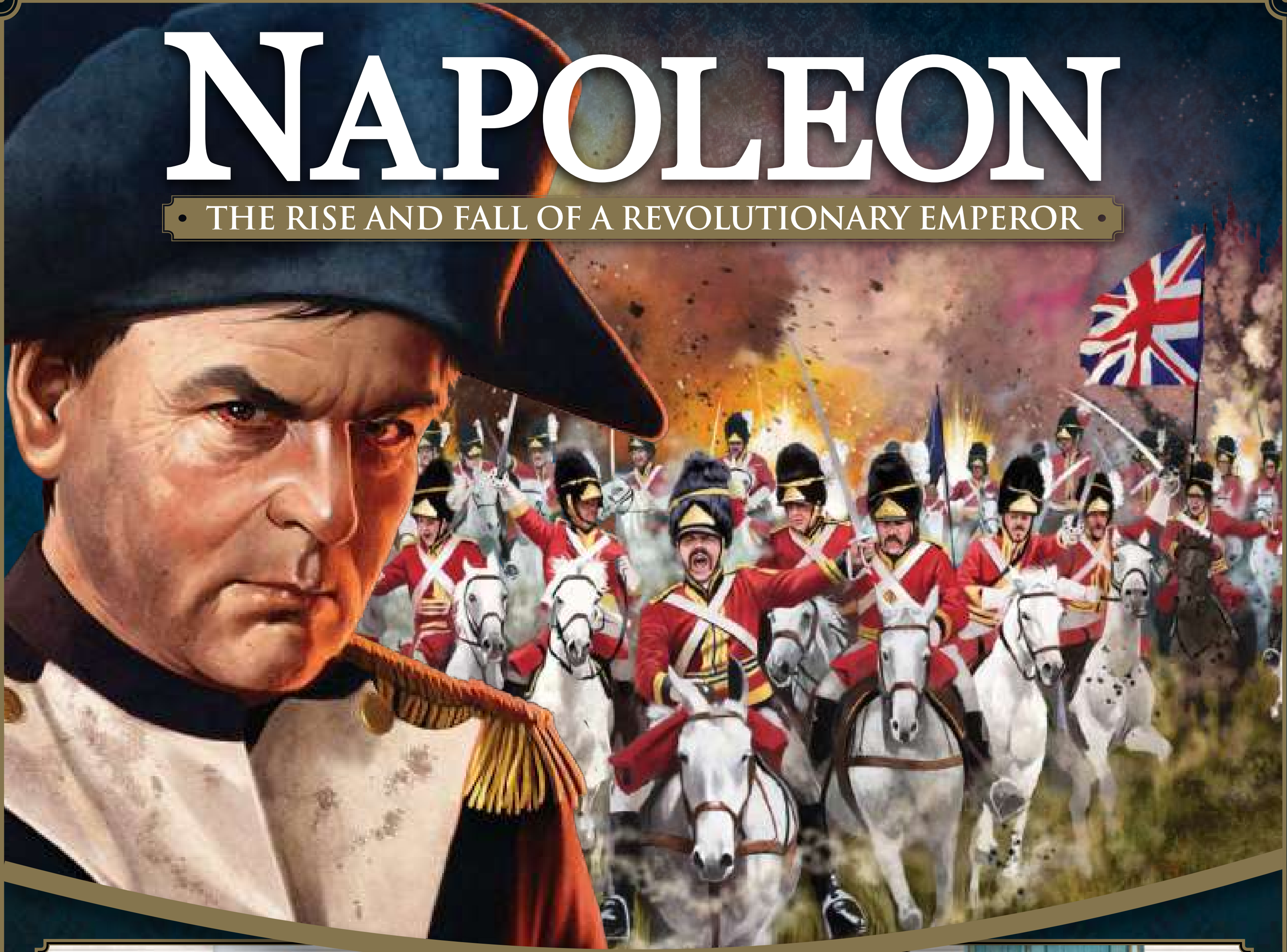
✓ No hidden costs 🚚 Shipping included in all prices 🌍 We deliver to over 100 countries 🔒 Secure online payment

FUTURE

magazinesdirect.com
Official Magazine Subscription Store

NAPOLEON

THE RISE AND FALL OF A REVOLUTIONARY EMPEROR



NAPOLEON IN EGYPT

E

THE STAR OF NAPOLEON ASCENDANT

N

"SHE MADE IT CLEAR THAT SHE VIEWED THE MARRIAGE AS A BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT"

NAPOLEON'S LIAISONS

MILITARY MASTER

Discover Napoleon's daring campaigns and revolutionary tactics

RISE TO POWER

How an artillery officer became emperor of the French

ROMANCE

Napoleon's marriages, affairs and the quest for an heir

AUSTERLITZ

THE END OF AN EMPEROR

S

"THE BODY WAS PLACED IN FOUR SEALED CASKETS, ONE INSIDE THE OTHER"

KEY BATTLES

The victories and defeats that defined the fate of Europe

DEATH & LEGACY

Why the Napoleonic legend continues to live on

BOOKAZINE

9021
9000